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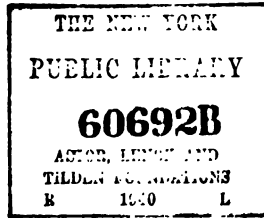
THE MASTER PASSION

A ROMANCE

WILLIAM C. STUBBS



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FELICE CONSTANT

OR

THE MASTER PASSION

CHAPTER I

THE sound of a paddle at slow intervals parting the water, then the noiseless bending of rushes and lily-stems, and a canoe stealthily ran its nose into the soft bank.

"I have come," said a girl's voice out of the darkness, half bold, half timid.

"Yes, and a brave sailor you are!" came a hearty answer. Then a form bent to the water's edge, and one strong hand reached down to steady the small craft while another was extended to its occupant; but scarcely had the man made the movement ere the girl had sprung lightly ashore and was standing by his side.

"So you think me brave, monsieur! And how else, pray, could a woman be, who lives in this wilderness? If we women who live on the edge of the world would be happy, we *must* be brave; for danger lurks in every shadow in these times of war, whether the shadow be that of white man or red man, the wild beast of the forest or the fever. Yes, I am brave; I *must* be brave.

I have never felt fear, save—but it matters nothing.” She threw off these last words lightly, as if to drive away a disagreeable thought.

“But you are so young—a mere child,” he went on, stooping to draw the canoe higher up on the spongy bank.

“All the more reason, then, why I should be brave,” she replied, laughing. “Perhaps when I am older and have seen as much of the world as you have, I may learn to be afraid; but you are brave, very brave, are you not?”

“I hope so—I try to be. God knows I need to be,” he answered gravely.

“And is your life so full of danger?” There was added interest in her tone. She had not expected such earnestness.

“Yes, mademoiselle, since I was a boy I have known scarce an hour when I felt secure from harm. My youth was spent as a captive among the Indians, compelled to follow them in the chase and in the war; my young manhood was spent in the hazardous employment of the *coureur de bois*, with wild adventurers exploring the forests and the streams of this new country; much of the last few years I have passed under the banner of King George in his frontier wars; and now, as a lover of liberty, I fight under the banner of Washington against foreign oppression. My life was conceived in danger, cradled in danger, nursed in danger, schooled in danger; and I feel it will be danger to the end.”



There was a moment of silence; then the girl resumed her semi-playful tone.

"You say I am young; but how do you know?"

Were it not a starless night the man might have seen a twinkle in the eyes that looked to him for answer. "You have never seen me," she continued. "Even now, standing before me, you cannot say whether I am large or small, red or white, comely or uncomely. I may be gnarled and weather-beaten as the old oak before my father's cabin, or lithe and fair as a young poplar; I may be as white as a lily or as brown as a thrush, or painted in all the hideous colors of my Indian sisters; you cannot know. And yet you tell me I am young! What marvellous eyes you have!" She closed with a laugh that floated over the waters like the notes of a flute. His ear had never heard so sweet a sound.

"I would know you were young by that silvery laugh," he replied; "but come with me higher up on the bank and I will tell you what further and better evidence I have. The footing is neither pleasant nor sure on this marshy point."

"But my father awaits me. He knows not where I have gone, and I must hasten back to him. I have done as I promised—the boat is here—I will——"

"But you will not send me away till I have thanked you. I have something to tell you—something that concerns me deeply. You will listen to it. You will help me." The man's tone was intense and irresistible.

He led the way through the tangled marsh growth,

parting the rushes with his strong arms that they might not touch her about whose personality, the time, place, and circumstance had woven for him so sweet a mystery. He would have taken her hand to assist her, but something dissuaded him; as it was, he took some satisfaction in spreading as broad a path for her as possible and tendering little suggestions and warnings which this child of Grosse Ile, reared upon its marshy banks, needed less than the wild birds needed guides through its leafy woods.

"And now," she said, as they seated themselves on the grassy bank, and after a moment, during which thoughts were busy though lips were silent, "you are to tell me how you know I am so young—too young to be brave."

The man waited a moment as if to be sure of himself.

"I do not need the help of sun, or moon, or stars, or firelight to know that you are young: say fifteen, sixteen, let us say—no, not seventeen. Other witnessses than my eyes have given testimony before the court of my heart. My ears, trained in the solitudes of these western forests to hear the gentlest footfall or the lightest note of the tiniest bird, tell me you are young—and, what is more, you are beautiful."

"Stop, monsieur! I asked a simple question; it required but a simple answer." With this her hand in involuntary gesture touched his. For the first time in years his hand had met a woman's. Before she could withdraw it he had taken it in his.

"Now," he went on eagerly, "I need neither eyes

nor ears to tell me the truth. Your hand, which is warm and soft and——”

The girl sprang to her feet like a frightened deer and uttered a call that was answered from the bushes above them on the bank. An approaching step fell upon the man's ears, and he recognized it as that of an Indian.

“Now, monsieur,” she said calmly, “as you will not answer my question directly, I will tell you I am young and I am not brave. I fear men who come with pretty speeches.”

“I ask your pardon, mademoiselle, a thousand times. My heart outran my judgment. I forgot that you came here only to save my life, and at the risk of your own. You do not know me—not even my name. For the present I have not sought to know yours. It is safer for us both. You know only that I am an Englishman—an Englishman who has thrown off his allegiance—a rebel against King George, hunted and sore pressed by his enemies. Out of your goodness of heart you do this, and not for me—I had almost said would God it were—but for this oppressed land of ours. You do not care for me; you would send me across this river to-night and never think of me again if only by so doing you served the cause you love.”

She tried to speak, but the impetuous flow of his words checked her.

“You shall know more than I have told you,” he went on. “All this day I have been hiding in the bushes and behind the trees and among the swamp

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rushes along this shore that I might catch a glimpse of you or hear your voice. I have seen you a hundred times. My eyes have followed you, hungering, as you went about your work, and once, as you went singing down the path to the river, I could have reached out from my hiding-place and touched you. Yes, I know with these eyes of mine that you are young, and by all that is true and good I know, too, you are beautiful. I know that you are brave, for no woman but a brave one would risk her life so far from the protection of yon fort with an aged father and an Indian woman alone to protect her; no woman but a brave one would risk her life for a spy—a man she never saw nor dreamed of. O mademoiselle, I have lived a hundred years to-day and yet it has been the shortest day of my life. I have not known that earth contained a vision for me such as I have seen to-day. Yes, my eyes have told me you are beautiful—more beautiful than the wild flowers that spring lovingly about your feet or the birds that flock around you to gather the crumbs you bestow upon them. When your voice came to me out of the darkness to-night, saying, 'I have come,' my ears told me the same sweet story; and when, just now, your hand touched mine, my every sense gave evidence of the truth and my heart spoke—too plainly, too abruptly. Forgive me!"

She felt him draw a step nearer, and she imagined what, had it been day, she might have seen—a hand extended and eyes earnest and pleading.

"I forgive you; but I have heard these fine words

before from gay gentlemen who have them ready for any young girl who will listen, and I have learned to mistrust them."

"But I swear——"

"You need not swear. I believe you. I am sure you are honest; and yet I feel that your sense of need and the little that my woman and myself have been able to do for you have helped to form this picture of me that you have painted, and you think, man-like, that a woman can be thanked only by a show of admiration; and, having given this, you will go about forgetting you have said it, and she——she may never forget." Her voice went on, low and tremulous: "When a man boldly utters these seeming trifles in a woman's ears, he scarcely knows how oft-times he sets revolving about his unthinking words her every thought and wish—her whole being. Upon her faith in his word, sometimes too lightly spoken, she may hang her whole life." Her tone now suddenly changed to one of apparent indifference: "No, I like not your talk, honest as it seems. The only return I ask for helping you to cross the river and escape your pursuers is the joy of knowing that I have done something, little though it be, to help the cause of American liberty and give to a soldier of the American army aid against our common enemy."

"And that you must know!" he exclaimed earnestly. "Colonel Clark shall know of this; and when he marches on Detroit, as he will soon, he will reward you as you deserve. But how comes it that so valiant

a champion of our cause lives under the very shadows of Fort Detroit? Has the cry of the oppressed reached so far into this Western world and found an echo in this lone island? Has English greed penetrated even to the very inmost recesses of these untamed forests and found its victims in young, innocent lives such as yours? Tell me, that my spirit may be nerved the more for the task before me."

"It is a story soon told," she replied, "though it must be lived to be understood. My father and I are French. We French of Canada and the American border have not forgotten that for sixty years all this goodly land was ours: this noble river teeming with fish, these giant forests abounding in game, this fertile soil springing with abundant and beautiful life, was ours. Frenchmen gave their lives and their fortunes to plant here the Lilies of France. With the surrender of Quebec that which they had struggled for passed to another. The Lion supplanted the Lily. English soldiers were sent to man these western posts, bringing with them rough speech, rough manners, and hereditary hatred of all that was French. The Indians and the French had been friends and had lived in peace together. Many of my countrymen had even gone to live with them, adopting their dress and language and marrying among them. With the coming of the English all was changed. The policy of the newcomers was to win the Indian by fair means or foul and set him against us. Bribery and rum did what cajolery and fair promises failed to do. Then came exactions

and burdens put upon us by a king across the sea, and by local governors anxious only for their own profit and preferment, and careless for the rights of the people, and especially of that portion which clung to the memories of La Belle France.

“When I was a little girl, we—my father, mother, and myself—lived happily on a little farm just below the Detroit settlement. Our cabin was in sight of the stockade, and by it ran the peaceful Savoyard. The year after the occupation of Detroit by the English, my father won the hatred of the English officers by his outspoken loyalty to King Louis of France. Englishmen hated us and lost no opportunity to injure us. One night our cabin was burned to the ground. In escaping, my mother took cold from exposure, and her death soon followed. My father, appealing for justice, was asked to swear allegiance to King George, and refused. Then his land was declared forfeited. He became bitter and resentful. He heard the cry of the colonists for redress of grievances and found in it an expression of his own heart. From that time on he knew not how to hold his peace. He was arrested, tried, and condemned to die. I, a mere child, went to the Governor and told him our story, the loss of our home and fortune, my mother’s death, my father’s age and infirmity. I begged for his life for myself. I pleaded my youth, my need of him, my love. Then came the cruel alternative of death or banishment. With joy I chose for him the latter, and with our faithful Indian woman we came to this lonely spot

selected for us—lonely save for the birds and the beasts of the forest and the Indians, who for these evil days have been very good to us. Here I have lived, learning at my father's knee and from the chance hunter who comes this way all I know of the life and the great world beyond my little horizon. No teacher could be more kind, more patient, more earnest than my father. He has taught me the love of God. He has taught me to be brave and true, to sympathise with the oppressed, to love liberty, to be a rebel—like you. Do you wonder that I long for the day when another flag shall fly over yon fort?"

"No! And by the help of a just God another flag shall fly there! And that, too, right soon. I thank you, mademoiselle, for this story. I shall be a better soldier for it."

For a time neither spoke. The girl was wrapp'd in thoughts of the past which crowded in upon her now so vividly, and the man in thoughts of a future for which he felt doubly nerved.

"Once to-day," he began again, "I saw you standing motionless in the doorway of your cabin, looking intently beyond the river, beyond the forests on the farther side—beyond, it seemed to me, even the sky itself. May I be so bold as to ask of what you were thinking?"

A light laugh like the silvering of the edges of a cloud by the reappearing sun greeted the question.

"Does monsieur think I keep a record of my thoughts?"

“Dreams, I perhaps should have said, for you stood as in a trance, so long and so intently you gazed.” He spoke to her in tones gentle and sweet as a summer breeze.

“Yes. I often dream. My days are full of them. I do recall one of to-day—but it was an old, old dream. I often stand and look out over the river with its never-failing flow, and long to know all that it knows as it brings its secret messages from the mountains and the plains and bears them down to the great ocean. I have looked across the waters and wondered and wondered what was beyond the horizon, back of the endless, tangled forests and shifting clouds that bound my little world. Is the great world beyond happy? Or is it, too, sometimes lonely and sorrowful? I have asked the eagles that build their nest in the dead top of a great tree near my home; and in the spring, as the birds return with the new songs they have learned in their southern home, I have asked them; and when the summer dies I long, in these my dreams, to fly away with them. How happy must people be who live where hearts may speak to other hearts. I feel at times that my heart, preying on itself, but for the saving presence of the one being in all the world that is left to me, is eating itself empty.”

The man remained motionless, his eyes fixed on the faint outline of a face in which he saw with his mind's eye the same intense longing expression he had seen in it once during the day. He wanted to tell her how God had hidden away the most beautiful things as if

for his own pleasure, and that she seemed to him like the pearl in the shell in the ocean's depths, and that he longed to take it from its lowly bed and spread its glory before the sun. But he scarcely breathed, so little did he dare to stop the flow of her words which seemed to him exquisite—delicious. He was charmed with them as by some spell. Her tone now changed, and she made a movement as if to leave him.

"Now I must go. My father will be alarmed. I have had my woman meet me here to take you across the river. She knows every current and eddy and will conduct you safely to a landing-place near the cabin of Jean Guion, to whom I give you this letter. It explains your coming. He is true and will help you. He, like many of our people on yon shore, is with you in this war."

She handed the soldier a small piece of folded paper, and at a word from her the Indian woman moved off toward the river.

"Will you not go with me?" he asked pleadingly.

"Yes, to the water's edge. I cannot go farther. My father awaits me."

Carefully he led the way through the tangled path to the canoe. The Indian woman had already seated herself. The girl uttered a simple good-bye in her native tongue, and then the man turned and took one of her hands in both of his.

"Mademoiselle, I thank you! A thousand times I thank you! I have given up everything to buy safety from the Indians within the past few days; even my

musket was lost when I swam to the island last night; my clothes are in shreds, and my pockets and belt are empty. I have nothing to give you in return for all your kindness but my love—a soldier's love—the first he has ever known, now dearer to him than life, and, as its pledge, this ring—my mother's—the last visible tie that binds me to the past." His voice trembled with earnestness.

"No, no, no, I must not!" she cried. "It is not mine."

He had left it in her hand, slipped into the canoe, and, grasping the reeds, had pulled its head into the stream.

"Then only till I come again," he called gaily, as the craft quickly caught the current and disappeared in the darkness.

"Yes—till then," she answered, hardly above her breath.

"*Au revoir!*" came faintly from over the waters.

"*Au revoir!*" echoed the rapid pulsing of the girl's heart; and it seemed to her that a part of her life had gone out with his departure.

CHAPTER II

FOR some time after the splash of the paddle in the hands of the Indian woman could no longer be heard on the shore, Felice Constant stood trembling with mingled joy and sorrow, her eyes peering out over the dark river as if to penetrate its gloom. Her first impulse was to call him back—this strong, ardent, heroic man, and for a reason she could not comprehend; perhaps only to hear again the sound of his voice, so different from any she had ever heard, carrying in its breath sincerity and warmth and action, dispelling fear, and drawing her on—on, whether she would or not, to forget herself and all the world beside.

Felice Constant had known but few men—none intimately, save her father. With few exceptions her acquaintances had been from among the men of the fort some twenty miles up the river, who, on their hunting and fishing excursions, had paid brief visits to the cabin of Pierre Constant, where they met a none too cordial welcome—young fellows, for the most part a blustering, braggart, grumbling lot, desperate over their being stationed in this miserable outpost, spending their time over their cups and at cards, cursing their *ennui*, and heartily wishing America at the bottom

of the sea, and themselves back amid the gay life of the older settlements. To these men she had been the subject of many a jest and banter, a shuttlecock tossed about on the battledore of their rude wit, a butterfly to be chased, and perhaps by some lucky knave imprisoned and spoiled. Their words were rude and oft-times perilously near the vulgar, and their eyes she could not look into without distrust. Into their company she came not often, but when she did, by force of circumstance, she felt a shrinking as from something bad at the core.

There were men in the Detroit settlement, both English and French, high of heart and station, with rough exteriors but gentle natures; but these seldom crossed the hidden path of the exiled French girl. She knew some of the small tradesmen of the settlement, fishermen who spent their time upon the river, guides, boatmen, who in their rough dress and rougher manners plied their oars up and down the great water highway that rolled before her father's door. These men, in the main honest, were yet adventurers, bold to rashness, keen for advantage, skilful in the hunt and the trade, good fellows in a way, but in a rude, uncouth way that drove the young French girl, born, though she was, in the wilderness, to choose rather the companionship of her own thoughts amid the solitudes of the river and the woods.

There were a few friends of her father—old-time friends, Frenchmen like himself, who remained as a shadow of the days of French supremacy, with much

of the old courtesy of speech and manner; but these seldom came to the Constant cabin, so far was it from the settlement. There was Father Le Blanc, of the French settlement of Sandwich, a little community across the river from Fort Detroit, though a few miles lower down, whose periodical visits to Grosse Ile were like rifts in a storm-cloud to her hungry spirit, bringing consolation and encouragement on which she fed for long days and nights. And there was her father, the shadow of a once strong man, feeble and oft-times complaining, yet withal kind and lovable. With this environment she was like the ivy that, reaching out for something by which it may climb to the sunshine, finds nothing but the damp mould of decaying life, and not one strong form lifted to support it.

But this night the young French girl had seen a vision that thrilled her through and through. "Was it only a vision?" she asked herself, as she brushed back from her face a lock of hair damp with the dew, and felt a mist gathering before her eyes. It was indeed partly a dream, for in these moments she seemed to see something of what her mother had told her in the happy days of her childhood, of La Belle France and the courtly, kindly manners of her kinsfolk; of the beautiful ladies with their powdered hair and snowy necks, their pretty waists and dainty feet; of the gallant gentlemen, brave and courteous, who led her mother, then but a young girl, captive by their words and manners, and finally, in the person of one more gallant than all—her father, wooed her, so tender

and true, that she surrendered all that she might follow him and share with him the uncertain fortunes of the New World. It seemed to her that a face, a voice, a touch from out that other life so far away, had come to her.

She started suddenly at the call of a night bird that flew over her head, and, remembering the fever that lurked in the night air among the marshes, she crept quickly back to the place on the bank where she had felt the touch of the man's presence, and, drawing her cape and hood well about her, threw herself face down upon the grass, and pressing his ring to her lips, burst into tears.

How long she lay thus she did not know, but it was not till the voice of the Indian woman called to her from the river that she came to a sense of her position.

"Yes, Marmjuda, I'm coming," she cried, and creeping down the bank and over the marshy path, she was soon seated in the canoe opposite her faithful servant, and the little craft was headed up stream in the direction of Pierre Constant's cabin.

For a long time neither woman said a word. The Indian, taciturn at all times, now required all her strength to drive the little boat against the current, and all her native skill and cunning in following amid the darkness the windings of the low coast line. Felice sat motionless, inwardly upbraiding her companion, who, she argued, must have something to tell her—some message—some word. At last in despair the girl broke the silence. Her questions, once begun, came

fast, many of them scarcely awaiting answer, but poured out as from a bursting heart.

"And did he not ask you any questions?"

"No-ask," replied the old squaw shortly, never missing a stroke of the paddle.

"Nor ask even my name?"

"No-ask," came again the stolid reply.

"Did he not send me a message?"

"No-send."

"Not a word?"

"No-send."

"Marmjuda, you tell me not the truth. Did he not send me an adieu—did he not say that he would come back again—that he would see me again? Think, good Marmjuda, think!"

This was too much for the Indian woman and spoken too fast; she met it with a grunt that meant as plain as words, "No-say." Then the figure in the bow of the canoe leaned forward.

"He is a rude, unmannerly fellow, Marmjuda—he did not even thank you—he stole away into the darkness with my letter, laughing in his sleeve at two foolish women. I tell you, Marmjuda, he is no spy; he is a deserter from Fort Detroit—an Englishman like the rest of them—a thieving flatterer—and we are well rid of him, Marmjuda." Her last words threatened to end in a sob.

A half-uttered sign of approval escaped the lips of the old squaw, and she plied her paddle with renewed vigor.

The girl seemed incensed by her companion's seeming indifference. It drove her at once to the man's defense, and her voice was almost fierce.

"It is not so, Marmjuda; you know it is not so! He was as gentle and kind to you as a brother. He could not pay you, for he was too poor. He thanked you and said he would return. He is no deserter—he is brave and true—he is a patriot and loves his country—he fights for the Colonies—he is risking his life to save us from these arrogant coxcombs who have robbed my poor father and sent him out here on this island wilderness alone to die! For shame, Marmjuda! You shall not say such things of the bravest, truest man that lives!" The girl was quivering from head to foot.

Marmjuda, to tell the truth, had few definite ideas on the subject. This young man had given her a hard night's work; as for the rest, she was willing to let it be as her young mistress wished, if she could decide in just what direction her wishes lay. From the young girl's manner the Indian woman decided that silence was a good refuge—good enough at least for an Indian; so she answered nothing, but bent hard to the paddle that was now rapidly pushing the little craft in to the Constant landing. The storm passed in the heart of Felice as quickly as it came; her next words were almost caressing, and as she stepped ashore she bent amiably to assist Marmjuda in dragging the canoe high upon the bank.

The cabin of Pierre Constant stood near the head of Grosse Ile and close to the river bank. About it was

a small clearing bounded on all sides but the river front by a tangled growth of forest. A patch of grass, in which wild flowers held high carnival undisturbed, separated the cabin from the river. The cabin was a one-story affair of rough-hewn logs, vine-covered, with two rooms. There was a door of heavy boards fastened by a sliding bolt, and one small window high up, from which shone a dim light.

Felice, followed by her servant, hastily made her way up the path and entered the cabin. A man, whose fragile form, pinched features, and grey locks betokened advanced age, sat close up to a fire that smouldered low on the hearth. Before him rose a wide chimney-piece ornamented with a small crucifix. A rushlight on the rude table was flickering in its socket. The old man had been asleep, and the opening of the door awakened him. When he half turned his head one could recognize the sharp visage characteristic of the Frenchman. There were the black, deep-set eyes, the lean, pointed face, the lingering vestiges of a once-proud moustache and goatee, both of pure white, with every one of the few remaining hairs straight and in order. The manner of the man, even in the simple movement of his head and hand, as the girl entered the room, betokened the breeding of a gentleman. She went to him at once, kissed him on the forehead, and set about playfully to explain her absence.

“Did you weary of waiting, father?”

“I am always weary when you are not here, my child. Are you not late? Had I not fallen asleep I *must have grown* anxious about you.”

"Yes, father; but when you know where I have been and what I have been doing you will not wonder that I am late—the rather you will be glad. You shall know it all soon. But first, something for you to eat."

She hung her hood on a peg. Marmjuda was reviving the fire with a few pine cones and sticks of beech from the pile that stood waist-high in the chimney corner, and the kettle on the crane was making ready to sing.

"Marmjuda will make some bouillon, hot and strong, for I am chilled, and then I shall tell you a tale about a splendid hero and a young girl whom you will love—a story that begins on our own Grosse Ile and ends—and ends—there. A hero like you, father, a good, noble man; and a heroine like—well, like me, your own Felice, we will say."

"By what strange chance, my daughter, have you heard this story? You have not read it"—and Pierre Constant glanced hopelessly at his little stock of well-thumbed volumes that occupied a rude shelf against the wall. "I know those books by heart. Have any of the young dandies from Fort Detroit been prowling about here to-night, filling your ears with pretty nothings? By all the Saints at once, I have a load in that musket"—pointing to an old weapon that rested on two pegs in the wall—"for any of those scoundrels who follow me and mine in our exile. They have robbed me of wife and lands—thy shall not have my daughter."

"No, no, father!" cried the girl, throwing her arms

about the old man's neck. "This story was not told me: It is a story I have made up myself. I dreamed it to-night—a pretty and a sad story, too, of love and war, so thrilling and so true!"

"You make it up and yet it is so true! I do not understand." Bewilderment was apparent in his countenance.

"You shall see! You shall see!" she exclaimed enthusiastically; "but now the bouillon is ready." The savoury smell rose toward the smoky beams like rich incense. A small rude table was drawn within reach of the old man and spread with a snowy white cloth on which was set an earthen porringer of the steaming soup and a pewter spoon for each, with toast made by Marmjuda over red coals raked out upon the rough stone hearth. Then the father and daughter, devoutly bowing their heads, made the sign of the cross, and the simple meal began.

Pierre Constant soon pushed back his chair and went to puffing sleepily at his pipe. Marmjuda, at Felice's direction, retired, and the girl herself set to work clearing away the few dishes. She longed to talk to her father on the subject so near her heart, but she could not speak until she could have him to herself. The time came just as the last blaze flickered on the hearth, leaving a quivering mass of red, and then, seating herself on the floor at the old man's knee and looking up into his face, she began:

"Were you frightened at my absence, father?"

"You were gone long. It is a dark night. I knew *not* what to think, my daughter."

"But Marmjuda was with me!"

"She is an Indian."

"Oh, but father, she is a good friend."

"Yes, and so were all the Indians till our enemies came among them. I trust no one now."

"What is to become of me if Marmjuda is not true?"
The girl looked into her father's face with troubled eyes.

"Yes! What is to become of you!" The man's words sounded like a far-off echo. "I ask that question myself a hundred times a day," he went on. "What is to become of my Felice in these evil days, with war on every hand, and the Indians who once were our friends now bribed to murder, and selling the scalps of men, women, and children in the streets of Detroit for no more than the skins of the beaver. I fear because of many things, but most of all—" and here he looked the girl full in her upturned face with a look of helplessness—"most of all because you are young and fair."

"But you must not think me still a mere child, father," she pleaded gently. "I am a grown woman, and I go armed, as you bade me. Marmjuda is never far from me. She is good to me—very good."

"Two women!" the old man exclaimed mournfully, "and every tree and bush a pitfall. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*"

"But I am safe now, father, and we are happy together. Will you listen to my story? Let us not think upon our troubles, but think of our joys—our blessings—instead. *We have each other—*"

"Yes, my child," said the old man, laying a thin, trembling hand on the girl's head.

She went on:

—"and we have a generous earth and river and sky about us that supply our wants. The Indians are our friends—at least those who live about us and I know us; they will protect us. As for the white men, I know the danger and I keep far from them. I know they make war on women and children." The girl's eyes glowed with a wild light. "But they shall not make war on Felice Constant and her father. If I live to see the unhappy day when I have not you to protect and instruct me, I have that"—and she pointed to the musket that hung above their heads. "I have that for them, and for myself if need be."

"I fear most," Pierre Constant continued, "the treachery of the Indians. Rum and gaudy finery are playing the mischief with them. Only to-day there passed up the river a boatload of stuff from Montreal, most of which will find its way among the Indians to win them away from their neutrality. Never have the Indians fared so well as now. They spend their time smoking and cooking, and the trails are long processions, day after day, of squaws going up to the fort to be feasted and sent away laden with goods—and all this that they may be turned against us and sent out to murder our people. The English are buying the scalp-locks of French and Americans and putting a premium on the most brutal savagery."

"It is all true, father, but deliverance is coming."

"I fear not. Long years I have waited for it, but it comes not. What are a few, scattered patriots, poor and unskilled in warfare, against the strength of a mighty kingdom proud in her riches and wielding an army that is the heir of centuries of discipline and victory!"

"But our cause is just. King George has offended God and every true Englishman in his treatment of us. Surely it cannot be that wrong will triumph in this struggle. But will you listen now to my story, father?"

The old man's pipe was smoked out, and his head nodded a sleepy assent. "Make it not long, my daughter, for I am weary. My eyelids are heavy."

Felice, taking one of her father's hands in hers, and stroking the long, thin fingers caressingly, began:

"Once there was a young soldier, proud of spirit and noble of bearing, sent by his commander into the enemy's country on an important and dangerous errand. Failure meant his certain death; success meant glory for himself and victory for his cause. Counting not the chances, he went bravely forward. When near his goal he found himself hard pressed by foes that dogged his footsteps. At last he was trapped and almost taken. His clothes were torn and travel-stained, his face and hands scarred by wounds made by branches and briars as in the night he made his desperate way through the forests. He had parted with everything, save his musket and his honour, to buy protection from the Indians, when, weak from exposure and starvation, he reached the bank of a deep

river. Midway of the stream was a beautiful island. Its isolated woods offered hope of temporary safety. Beyond the island, on the farther bank of the river, he could expect a friendly welcome from those who at heart were friendly to his cause. Hesitating not for a single moment, and, pressed by danger on every side, he flung away his musket—his last weapon of defense—and, plunging into the current, made his way, unseen in the darkness of the night, to the island. Are you listening, father?"

A faint "Yes, my child!" came in response from the bowed head.

"Creeping into a thicket, the soldier threw himself exhausted on the ground and fell asleep. At the break of morning he awoke and made his way over fallen logs and through tangled vines till, just as the sun arose, he reached a little clearing on the farther side of the island, where the sound of an axe told him he was near a dwelling."

The old man's eyes were closed. His fingers twitched and his body relaxed.

"Are you sleeping, father?" asked the girl, rising to her knees and playfully touching with her finger-tips each of the old man's eyelids.

"No, my dear, I hear. Methinks I've once heard the story. Go on."

"Determined to wait till nightfall to escape to the mainland beyond, he retreated again into the forest; but, driven by hunger, at evening he again approached the clearing, where he found an Indian woman gather-

ing sticks. To her in a few words he told his need. The Indian woman had a good heart though an old one. She carried the message to the cabin in the clearing, where in return for her simple service to a good old man and his daughter she had found shelter and protection for life."

Felice looked up curiously into her father's face again, then resumed, now half to herself:

"The daughter prepared provisions and drink, and at nightfall she and the Indian woman sought out the stranger, who eagerly awaited their coming. The Indian placed in his hands bread and meat and a flask of wine, and the other asked him the story of his adventure and the meaning of his plight. He took the food and drink with the most grateful acknowledgments, excused himself for lack of ceremony, and fell to eating, and, as hunger would permit, to answering questions. Are you interested, father?"

Pierre Constant slowly opened his eyes and nodded assent.

"The soldier related to the girl how Colonel Clark, of Virginia, at the head of a company of patriots, had taken Vincennes, thrown Governor Hamilton and his officers into irons, and was even then marching them off to Virginia."

The old man's eyes were wide open, and his hand closed on his daughter's with a tight, nervous grip.

"Taken Vincennes, Felice! Am I dreaming? Are you beguiling your old father with a fairy tale? So good news cannot be true!"

"It is in the story, father."

"Yes, yes, a story. I know—I know"—and, as if satisfied it was all a creature of the story-maker's imagination, Pierre closed his eyes again, and leaning back his head, lapsed into semi-consciousness. The girl went on:

"After taking Vincennes, Colonel Clark turned his eyes toward Detroit, the most important post in all the western country, and planned its capture. He had heard ill-defined rumours that Major Lernoult, who had succeeded Governor Hamilton at Detroit, was enlarging the fortifications, and had sent word to him that by so doing he was saving the Americans that necessity. Desiring to know exactly the situation on the Lakes before marching his forces northward, he determined to send men who would penetrate into the English lines and bring back reports. He called for volunteers who would brave the dangers of the wilderness, and on foot and alone by separate routes make their way to Detroit, examine its defenses, learn the plans of its defenders, and, returning, give him information.

"Among those who signified their willingness to go was a young Virginian—a lieutenant. He stepped from the ranks and asked that he might be sent. 'I know the way,' said he, 'and the danger. Fort Detroit was the home of my boyhood. I was born there under the French flag. My father and mother and perhaps a sister lie buried there. My sister may yet be living. I have land there of which I have been robbed. I en-

listed in this war for two purposes—one selfish and the other unselfish; one to fight against foreign oppression and free my country of unjust rule, the other to find a way back to my home, whence years ago I was carried by the Indians, to find my mother's grave and my father's, to avenge his murder, and to seek my sister if she be yet living. I know what I am undertaking. I know the Indians of the Lake region are hired to murder man, woman, and child if suspected of disloyalty to King George; but I know, too, every inlet and isle of the Detroit from the Maumee to the Huron. I will go, and I will fetch the information you seek.'

"This service, so gallantly offered, Colonel Clark reluctantly accepted. He could ill afford to lose the strong, brave young officer whom he had learned to depend on in hard places and to love; but the mission was a hazardous one, demanding sagacity and bravery of the highest order—and here was the man. And so he went forth, and now he was telling his tale to the girl as if he had guessed that her heart beat for the same flag, and her prayer went daily up for the same cause, as did his. A strange story, is it not, father?"

The old man's head had sunk upon his breast; his arm now hung limp by his side. He made no answer, nor did the girl wait for one. Her hands, tightly clasped together, were stretched at arm's length on the floor, and her eyes gazed fixedly into the dying fire.

"Yes, a hero!" she went on, talking to herself, "tall—tall as a young pine and as straight and strong; shoul-

ders broad as the breast of a bear; a voice to command, yet tender as if tuned to a great affliction; a mind noble and generous; a heart living and throbbing and—loving.”

She sat transfixed, a breathing statue; the present was lost to her consciousness—the white-haired old man, the flickering rushlight, the smouldering embers. Only the story was real—the story with its brave young heart opening up a vista of paradise to her, then going out and away to its triumph, to rejoin the army of Washington, to fight for freedom, to wear a star, to win the applause of men, the smiles and love of women—other women; and she, Felice Constant, a simple French girl, an exile on a lonely island with her aged father and—her story. It was a moment that marked for her the end of girlhood and opened the world of womanhood, so beautiful, and hitherto so far away.

Her head was now upon the old man's knee. One long, deep sob that seemed a mystery of mingled joy and sorrow, then tears that would have furrowed cheeks less fair—and then she slept. The cabin was still, and two lives were lost in the dreams of yesterday.

CHAPTER III

A MILE above the head of Grosse Ile, and a short distance below the French settlement of Sandwich on the Canadian side of the Detroit River, stood, solitary and almost concealed among the trees, the cabin of Jean Guion. Jean was a somewhat rusty relic of the early French occupation, his memory going back nearly to the days of De la Mothe Cadillac, who in 1701 founded the Detroit settlement. He was a Frenchman heartily out of sympathy with the English *régime*, and, furthermore, he made a poor show of concealing his enmity toward those of his own race who accepted the new order of things with equanimity. He kept close to his cabin in these his later years, enjoying few friendships and holding as little communication as possible with the inhabitants of the settlements up the river. Indeed, Pierre Constant, of Grosse Ile, was his only intimate; between these two existed a bond of sympathy that drew them closer with the passing years. Pierre was the older and the feebler of the two, so his cabin became their trysting-place during many an hour, in which they lived over their young manhood spent in the peaceful French days. It was to Jean Guion that Felice Constant had directed the

young lieutenant of the Colonial army on the night on which our story opens.

Scarcely had the smoke begun to curl from Jean Guion's chimney the next morning ere the figure of a man approached it from the river. The old Frenchman's keen ears heard the footfalls before they had proceeded far. It was an early hour for visitors, so he went at once to the door, opened it guardedly, and peered out. The stranger came forward with an air of confidence.

"Bon jour, Jean Guion! An early hour for a call!"

Jean answered the salutation with true French civility.

"I might have waited till a more reasonable hour, but the truth is I am chilled to the marrow from a night on the bare ground. Will you take in a stranger for a spark of comfort, whose only pledge of friendship is his poverty and need?"

"Come in; come in!" exclaimed the man. "Jean Guion never turns a deaf ear to one who comes needy."

The Frenchman's sharp eyes were taking in his visitor from head to foot. The man was of splendid build, with frank, honest face, and hearty manner. A vagabond though he was in dress, it took no practised eye to discover that it was in appearance only. His eye was straightforward and true; his head had a self-reliant poise; his hand-grasp was resolute and manly; his voice rang true and gave confidence at once.

They entered the cabin together, Jean holding the door wide open.

"I will explain——" began the visitor by way of further apology.

"No need, my friend, till you have had a sip of brandy to warm you up, and some fish broiled by the best cook on the river. Here, Mintinao, a platter for our guest, and my jug."

The woman addressed mechanically set about obeying. She was a person of heavy features and large bulk, dressed in a strange mixture of French and Indian costume. That she was the mate of Jean Guion was not hard to decide; for, stretched at full length on a bench that ran half-way along one side of the cabin, lay a hulk of a fellow with the unmistakable features of the half-breed, furtively looking out from between half-closed eyelids at the newcomer, though his eyes never met those of the stranger. He was undeniably a link in this chain of three, though it was hard to imagine the woman and the boy being part and parcel of the same household with the old Frenchman whose dried, wrinkled face showed signs of intelligence and breeding unusual for these parts, and whose tongue, loosened under the influence of a stout pull at the liquor, a cup of which was set before him by the woman, seemed hung in the middle.

The savory smell of well-broiled fish, the fumes and tingle of the liquor, the glow of the open fire, and the cordial welcome of his host, reached the heart of Robert Norvell by every possible avenue of approach, and prompted a spirit of exhilaration and good-nature he had not shown in many a day.

"Now, Monsieur Guion," he exclaimed a little later, as, at the Frenchman's suggestion, he drew his stool up to the rough board on which the fish sizzled beside a platter of honey and a loaf of coarse bread cut in slices of generous proportions, "you will permit me to make a claim to your generous hospitality other than my need, eloquent as that may be. Will you read this?"

Norvell drew from his belt a small, neatly folded piece of paper and handed it to Guion.

"Ah, a letter!" he exclaimed, opening his eyes wide. "'Tis a long time since Jean Guion read a letter." Then, wiping his fingers on his breeches, he took the paper in his dark, clumsy fingers, and with infinite pains and interest unfolded it and read aloud the few words it contained:

"MONSIEUR JEAN GUION :

"He who hands you this is our friend; he fights with Washington. "F_____."

The Frenchman arose to his feet, and, grasping the hand of Norvell, wrung it excitedly.

"Welcome! A thousand times welcome, Monsieur — Norvell, did you say?"

"Robert Norvell, a lieutenant in the Continental Army, at your service," replied the young man, rising in his place, "and I am right glad and not a little surprised to meet so good a friend of our cause under the very guns of Fort Detroit."

"Ah, monsieur, you will find many, many such

friends in this country. We French are with the Colonists."

"But not all are so outspoken in their loyalty as is Jean Guion."

"Some say Jean Guion is a fool," returned the old man.

They resumed their seats, and Guion bent over the little note. He read it again, then, turning a quizzical eye on the young man, repeated thoughtfully the name of the initial letter signed to the note.

"Do you not know who wrote it?" asked Norvell.

The Frenchman's brow contracted.

"'F' is for fairy," went on his companion. "Know you not a fairy who dwells over yonder on Grosse Ile, near the upper woods, where the marsh bends away to the north? A French fairy, almost within sight of Jean Guion's cabin, and he not know her? For shame, Monsieur Guion! Or are you shamming?"

A light broke over the old man's face.

"Felice!" he cried. "Felice Constant! She wrote that letter! She is the fairy! Look, Jacques—a letter from Felice!" This to the boy, who had risen at the first sign of something to eat, and, taking a seat opposite Norvell, had buried his face in his platter.

Jacques Guion looked up, and Norvell thought he had never seen so forbidding a face, with its long peaked chin, high cheek-bones, low brow, and sunken, heavily arched eyes. Bringing his fist heavily down upon the table, making it tremble and shake, the boy fairly bellowed:

"No Felice! It a damn lie! Felice no write that."

Then he pushed back from the table, kicked his stool from under him, and stalked toward the door. Half way there, he turned:

"Felice no write that, I say. It a lie."

His teeth gritted and his breath hissed through them.

Norvell arose and faced the angry boy.

"Be not angry, my friend," he said composedly. "You may be right. I know not the name of her who wrote this letter. It was given me last night by a young woman on Grosse Ile who bade me give it to Jean Guion, and it was her canoe and her servant who brought me to this kindly shelter. As I say, I know not her name. It may be Felice—surely no one deserves the name more; it may be Polly, or Annette, or Marie. I know this, however, and it is no lie, I assure you"—he spoke now earnestly and aggressively—"that the writer of this letter, whatever may be her name, is the fairest flower that grows on the green banks of this beautiful river, and that, Monsieur Guion,"—he turned to the old man—"is saying much, for I never in all my wanderings saw a more enchanting vision than that which greeted my eyes this morning as I beheld the long coast-line of Grosse Ile just touched by the rays of the rising sun, with its crown of stately trees, and its feet bathed in the sparkling, lily-carpeted waters." Then he turned again to Jacques, whose scowl had slightly softened under what he understood to be at least a partial admission that

Felice Constant was not the writer of the letter, and extended a hand. "Come, Jacques, let us be friends. We have no quarrel. Here is my hand."

The boy hesitated a moment, looked a little shame-faced, took the proffered hand, and then, shambling to his bench in the corner of the cabin, sat himself down, his dark face set and his black, restless eyes shining with piercing brightness.

"Mind not Jacques," the old man said apologetically, and with a half twinkle in his eye. "He likes Felice. He will marry her some day."

Norvell inwardly shuddered at the thought, but betrayed no emotion.

"And does this Felice like Jacques?" he inquired unconcernedly.

Guion shook his head. "I know not. I never asked her; ask him," pointing to the figure in the corner.

Norvell did not relish stirring up the boy again, but the subject was worth following, at least on invitation.

"How is it, Jacques? What does the fair Felice say?"

"She no say," he snarled. "Felice mine. She no write that letter." The words came out like bullets.

"Perhaps not, my friend; but if she did, and she is yours, as you say, you are the luckiest Frenchman in all the world. But I would advise you to find out first what she has to say about your claim to ownership. Women are a little peculiar in such matters."

Jacques was too low-browed to penetrate the stranger's full meaning, and after the manner of his

Indian ancestry, having nothing further to say, he said nothing.

Norvell now turned with a feeling of disgust from the wretched figure in the corner, and suddenly asked of Jean:

“Did you, years ago, know a man by the name of Norvell, who with his wife and two children lived in the Detroit settlement?” The eagerness of the question almost startled the Frenchman.

“Norvell? Norvell? Yes! Yes!—John Norvell,” he said thoughtfully.

“Yes—John Norvell!” repeated the other earnestly.

“I remember him,” went on Jean—“an Englishman—killed by the Indians fifteen—twenty years ago.”

“Yes, an Englishman,” repeated Norvell, “an Englishman when it was a proud thing to be an Englishman, but too loyal to his king for his own safety. Yes, killed by the Indians—and by a Frenchman—a damned cowardly Frenchman—pardon, monsieur!—who refused to give him shelter with his little ones when pressed by bloodthirsty savages, and who, shutting the door of his cabin in the poor man’s face, looked from his window and laughed to see him struck down. Jean Guion”—he continued, rising from his seat and glaring at the old Frenchman with the ferocity of a wild beast—“I am hunting that man! I shall some day find him! That murdered man was my father! Those two children were my sister, a little girl of five or six, and myself! I shall find the murderer! His face is pictured here,” and he tapped his forehead. “Eighteen

years is a long time to carry the image of a devil in one's brain—to look upon it night and day; to see its villainous smile of triumph as I saw it that day when, as a boy, I ran beside my father and cried with him for succour and saw the door shut in our faces and heard the demoniac laugh of scorn and triumph as my poor father fell. Oh, what a terrible picture it was for a boy to witness!—was it not, Jean Guion? Do you wonder that it haunts me day and night? Do you wonder that I recall that face and voice? Grown older though the murderer be, I shall know him, and I shall blot out the memory of it all when I have seen him begging me for mercy, as I heard my father begging it from him—in vain—in vain.”

The speaker's face was blanched; he clenched the table before him till the muscles of his hands stood out like knots of rope; then he dropped on his knees and buried his face in his hands, his whole frame shaking as with the ague.

“Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!” exclaimed the old man in his bewilderment. He had listened, half dazed, motionless like something a serpent had fascinated. His mind had gone back to a story reported in the settlement near the time of which the man had spoken, but so many deeds of violence characterised those days that all was a hopeless jumble in his brain. He could but sit and stare vacantly at the man before him, who was acting over again the life-tragedy of his boyhood.

Norvell quickly regained his self-possession, the tumult of emotion giving place to a gentle calm.

“Pardon, my friend,” he said, rising and passing his hand over his brow, which was covered with a cold sweat, “I feel at times that some dreadful unseen power has hold of me and is shaking my very soul. Let me now go on with my story, that you may know it all. After my father’s murder I was taken away by the Indians, who in a short time went on the warpath against tribes to the south. I was carried with them. For five years I lived as an Indian; then I escaped to the white settlements on the Muskingum. From there I journeyed east, spending miserable years in adventures by land and water as a trader, a trapper, a guide, a *coureur de bois*, an adventurer, and finally a soldier. It was in Virginia that I heard the name of Washington and learned all that it stood for. I listened as men talked of their burdens and the indignities of the mother country. I caught the spirit of the men of Virginia, and longed to see tyranny rebuked and America free. I had been with Washington at the march on Fort Du Quesne. There I learned to admire, to love him; there I learned to think his thoughts, to dream his dreams, to fight his battles; and when he drew his sword for American independence I became the rebel that you see me, pledged to give my life, if need be, for the cause of liberty. When Colonel Clark set out from Virginia to reduce the western outposts of the English I went with him. In this adventure I saw not only glory for our cause, but the opportunity I had longed for, to fight my way back to the Detroit and there find the graves of my

father and mother, seek out my sister, if she be living, and meet again that accursed face. I was with Colonel Clark in the awful march on Vincennes, I was with him when Hamilton surrendered. I learned with feverish joy of Clark's designs on Detroit. I asked that I might serve him by coming here to learn the nature of the English defenses that thus I might at the same time serve myself. He accepted my offer and I am thus far on the road—thanks to a young French girl on Grosse Ile and to your hospitality.”

Norvell was striding back and forth across the floor, and as he concluded the story he stood before the open door. Jacques was piling a large fish-net in one end of a flat-bottomed boat. “You go fishing to-day?” Norvell said to the old man without turning.

“Oui, monsieur,” replied Guion quickly, as if suddenly awakened from a dream. “It is a good day for fish. The wind is right. Jacques will make a good haul. Will you not go with him?”

“A day at the sport would rest me greatly. It would bring back, too, the days when, as a boy, I fished these waters with my father. But I do not care again to get on the windward side of the enemy; they have just given me the worst chase of my life.”

“You need fear nothing of the Indians so long as you are my guest,” replied the Frenchman. “As for the English at the Fort, you must look out for yourself. They like not Jean Guion, and they like not his friends.”

“You take care of the Indians, my good friend, and

I will endeavour to look out for the English—they at least will not shoot a man in the back.”

“But in this neighbourhood, at least, they are hiring others to do it,” answered Guion spitefully.

“For that matter,” rejoined Norvell, “neither English nor Colonists have much to lay claim to in the matter of humanity. But what’s the odds? A dead man is no more dead with a tomahawk in his skull than with a bullet in his brain. I don’t see why a man who sets out to kill or be killed by his fellow should be squeamish about the way in which it is done. But this stirring up of the Indians to take sides in this war is a sight to make angels weep. Each side claims to be the friend of the red man, and charges the other with designs of robbing him of his patrimony. A string of glass beads and a drink of brandy is the crowning argument, and the poor savage fights for the privilege of saying who shall finally strip him of his possessions.”

“Left to themselves,” the Frenchman added, “they would be slow to take part in a conflict which promises nothing to them. The best of their chiefs know this, but their influence is gone with the constant coming of boatloads of supplies sent out by the government at Montreal to win their favour and keep it. The Indians have been my friends, and I know them through and through. There are many good and even noble natures among them, but the precept and example of the trader and the soldier is working their ruin. The nature of the Indian is little understood except by

those of us who have lived with him on terms of intimacy. The Indian is not naturally cruel; he does not kill for amusement, as we do. He loves his children, and will endure much for them. He is just, and has a strong sense of right and wrong. A breach of faith with him is a sin of sins. The Indians of the Lake region, when I came first up the river, were easily dealt with; their confidence was readily obtained; their friendship could be counted on. Then came the adventurer, the trader, and then the soldier and the big guns. The newcomers bribed, and browbeat, and lied, and deceived these simple-minded people; they dazzled them with their civilisation; they made them drunken with their firewater; they called them to great councils and broke their agreements. The priest came with his crucifix, the trader with his baubles, and the soldier with his sword, and in exchange for his patrimony the red man got a piece of colored cloth, an earring, a kettle, a flask of brandy, and the privilege of taking up the quarrels of each against the other."

The two men, while talking together, had been watching Jacques. His net now lay in a heap upon the boat's bow, a gun alongside; the boy himself was standing, paddle in hand, ready to shove off.

"You go now; Jacques is ready. *Bon voyage!*" said Guion.

Norvell thanked his host and quickly ran down the bank. Jacques's face betrayed no special interest in the fact that he was to have the stranger for a companion. Perhaps he was half-way pleased at the

thought that if the handsome young Englishman were with him he could not be at the same time with someone else. At any rate, he made no objection, and not even a response, when Norvell, taking a seat in the boat, said cordially, "Jacques, I hope I will bring you good luck to-day."

The boat was headed down stream. The craft was a rude contrivance, but it rode the smooth water gracefully, and in the rapid current near the Canadian shore made good speed. The conditions were just right for fishing, and the prospective respite for a few hours from the toil and danger of the days just gone gave to Norvell a feeling of exultation that voiced itself in song. The half-breed looked glum, and gave nothing more than the barest monosyllables in answer to questions.

"Where do you fish, Jacques?"

The boy stopped paddling with seeming reluctance and pointed a long bony finger to a small island whose stony coast-line lay a short distance down the river between Grosse Ile and the Canadian shore.

"A capital place! Many's the time I have fished there. My father was a famous Nimrod in his day. It is all coming back to me now. Yes, it was there we found our best sport nearly twenty years ago. There is a ledge of rock beneath the surface that follows the middle of the current, and along that ledge the fish are most plentiful."

Jacques made no comment. Seated in the stern, he wielded the paddle with unvarying speed and consummate skill. His long, sinewy arms, bared to the shoul-

der, were almost black; his dirty red shirt, minus fastening at the throat and breast, spread wide, showed a surface of swarthy skin stretched tight and hard over big ribs; his hair, uncombed, dropped to his shoulders in tangled, black lines like a horse's mane, and at times fell in a foretop over his eyes, causing him to shake his head like a big beast; from his ears hung heavy ear-bobs of copper, and about one arm was a broad band of the same metal; his breeches, confined at the waist by a leathern strap, extended only half way down, leaving his big sprawling feet and the calves of his powerful legs bare. His face was narrow, with forehead low and receding; the eyes were a restless black set under cavernous brows. Norvell thought, as he looked at the boy, he had never seen a more uncouth-looking creature; and yet his splendid development of form, superb frame, and muscles of iron, attracted and held his attention and admiration.

They were passing the head of Grosse Ile, and Norvell's eyes swept the shore for a glimpse of the cabin of Pierre Constant and its lovely mistress; but, whether from design on Jacques's part or not it cannot be known, the canoe kept close to the Canadian shore, and naught of the island could be seen but a confused mingling of green grass and leafy trees—a mass of color 'twixt the water and the blue sky.

Despairing of seeing Felice Constant, for by that name he had come to think of the French girl, he resolved to make Jacques converse. The task was difficult, for the young barbarian was blessed with a stock

of monosyllables for any and all subjects and occasions; indeed, conversation seemed with him to be a lost art. Hunting, trapping, fishing, trading, fighting, Indians, English—everything that could be of possible interest to the boy was tried, with the invariable result that Norvell found himself engaged in a distressing sort of monologue in which he was not quite sure but that he was not only the sole talker, but the sole listener. Every other avenue to the boy's mind appearing to be closed, he determined to try that which on one occasion had seemed to lead somewhere—the French girl of Grosse Ile. But he hesitated to re-introduce the subject; he felt it was necessary to win and hold this boy's confidence, for the fellow held his secret as well as did Jean Guion, and it would be a simple matter, if this young savage took offense at him, to bring the whole garrison of Detroit down on him. The subject was inevitable, however, for it was uppermost in the mind of each.

Norvell suspected that Jacques's reticence was due largely to a suspicion that somehow he had won Felice Constant away from him, or had at least made her acquaintance. The boy had natural wit enough to know that if a comparison were drawn by the girl the young American was easily leagues ahead of him. The consciousness of this fact made Jacques ugly. Norvell determined to be very polite, to draw out the boy, and at the same time leave him with a not unfavourable impression as to his own position in the matter. At any rate, his proximity to the girl's home stirred his long-

ing to speak her name. His whole heart rose into his throat like a huge interrogation-point, threatening to choke him if his questions were not asked; so, unpromising as was the prospect, he began:

"You fish at Grosse Ile?" This he said, pointing to the dark line of the island that lay to their right, and veiling his interest in a tone of indifference.

"No good," answered the sphinx, giving a vigorous shove on his paddle as if by way of emphasis.

"You hunt on Grosse Ile?" Norvell went on, gaining courage.

"*Non*," came the answer.

"It is a beautiful island." The truth was either self-evident, or the boy was fatigued at having answered two questions, so he vouchsafed no answer. Norvell waited for a time, doubting the expediency of following up the trail. They were nearing the fishing-grounds. It must be now or never."

"You go to Grosse Ile often?"

"I no go much."

"Felice Constant meets you there?"

The dark face showed signs of disturbance, and for the first time the eyes of the half-breed and those of the young soldier met squarely. The latter saw his advantage and pressed it.

"You have known Felice Constant a long time? You love her? You walk through the woods together hand in hand? You talk of when you will go before the priest and marry, and will build a cabin among the trees on a bank where green grass and wild flowers run riot? *Speak up, boy; is it so?*"

The fellow had ceased paddling and was looking out over the water as if interested in the sight before him; seemingly hundreds of fishes, leaping from the water, were sporting in the sunlight, their backs and sides shining like crystals, and then diving into the cool depths to return again and repeat the performance a little farther on.

"You walk with her? You dance with her? You go boating with her on the river?"

"*Non, non,*" replied Jacques, "I no do that. Monsieur Constant watch Felice. She no leave Grosse Ile. She no cross the river. She stay there ever—ever."

There was something pathetic in the way these last words were spoken, as if the boy had really thought out for the girl an endless destiny of sorrow.

"But she is happy?" half-questioned Norvell.

"She sing, she laugh, she love her père."

"Does she love no one else?"

"One time I think yes; one time I think no. She love no Anglais." This last came quickly and with a look of one startled by the bare thought.

"That is perhaps because she never sees Englishmen," suggested Norvell. "Does she not go to balls and assemblies at the settlements—at the fort?"

"*Non, non!* Monsieur Constant say no. Felice no like balls and partees. *Non, non,* no ball, no partee, no Anglais. She like Frenchman—she like me—Jacques Guion."

"She has told you?"

"*Non!*"

"You will marry her?"

"*Oui.*"

"When?"

"Monsieur Constant he die." There was something dreadful in the boy's eyes.

"When?" asked Norvell, a terrible frown gathering on his brow, and his body bent toward the fellow as if to read his inmost thought.

"Jacques Guion no tell." A laugh followed that was hoarse and cruel.

"You would kill him?" Norvell's eyes read the answer before it came.

"*Oui, I kill him! Felice mine!*"

"You devil! Utter that girl's name again, and I'll put you where you can't even threaten with that vile tongue." At the same time, with a spring that was terrible in its force, Norvell was upon the half-breed. The boat lurched violently under the sudden shifting of its load, and would have turned over had not the soldier, nerved to superhuman strength, jerked the boy forward so that he fell flat on its floor. The fellow, roaring, cursing in French and English, reached first for his gun and then for his knife, but his antagonist pinned his big arms to his side with a grip that almost cut to the bone. He kicked, and writhed, and fought like an enraged tiger till, soaked to the skin with the water that poured into the boat at every lurch, and weak to the point of exhaustion, he became passive as a child.

Norvell transferred the half-breed's knife to his own

belt, and taking the gun, took his seat again in the bow of the boat. Now, thoroughly subdued, Jacques meekly took up the paddle and resumed his work. The boat had been carried around the head of the little island and away from the fishing-grounds. At Norvell's stern direction Jacques turned its course about and brought it back to the point whence it had drifted.

A little later, at a sign from Norvell, the half-breed brought the boat to land, and preparations were at once made for fishing, as if nothing had happened. The boat was drawn up on the beach, upturned and emptied of water; the net was carefully arranged again in the stern so that it would pay out freely. Neither man said a word, Jacques awaiting the direction of Norvell, who communicated his wishes by nods and gestures. The first haul proved a heavy one, and as the two men drew it in they waded waist deep into the water in their eagerness to lose no part of the shining prize. They tugged at the groaning weight until they saw, pulled up on the sand, a great heap of jumping, wriggling, gasping beauties. Norvell, used as he was to the prodigal wastefulness of nature in the forests and rivers of the new world, and disturbed as he was at the revelations of his companion, could scarcely restrain a shout of exultation. Again they spread the nets, and again, until the bottom of the boat was covered with the fat and shining prey.

It was a hard pull up the river—too hard to admit of conversation, if, indeed, other conditions were fit. Each took turn at the paddle, and each found need of *all his strength*.

As they neared the landing-place in front of Jean Guion's cabin, Norvell, who was paddling, steered the craft to land. He realized that he had won the enmity of this young savage, and that safety lay alone in making a strong play upon his fear. This he now proceeded to do. He told him that it was in his power to advise his father, and through him Pierre Constant and his daughter, of his wicked designs against the old man's life; that if the old man came to harm the blame would be laid at his door and that he, Robert Norvell, would make it his first business to call him to account. He gave the boy to understand, in words that bore no uncertain meaning, that the honour and happiness of Felice Constant were dearer to him than life itself, and that any act on his part that endangered these would meet with swift and overwhelming vengeance. Jacques was now thoroughly cowed, and by look and word indicated that the lesson had been taken to heart, at least for a time.

When Norvell brought the canoe to land before the cabin of Jean Guion, he greeted the old Frenchman heartily, and later, when they sat about a steaming pot of venison, he sounded Jacques's praises as a fisherman so loudly that the fellow absolutely forgot, for the time being, the awful drubbing he had just had.

CHAPTER IV

THE evening was spent in cleaning and preparing the fish for the Detroit market, where it was customary for Jacques to take his catches, and bring home in exchange a few household necessities and a luxury or two—perhaps flour, bacon, coarse muslin, tobacco, thread, a kettle, and for Mintinao a few pieces of assorted ribbon and a handful of wampum. Nor would he forget a jug of shrub, which ere his return would be well sampled.

The evening's work ended, Mintinao, with immense difficulty, climbed to her bed under the eaves, and Jacques, wrapping a dirty red stroud about his big body, stretched himself out on the floor, while Jean Guion and his guest fell to talking. The conversation began by Norvell asking his host the story of his life. The Frenchman gave a few vigorous puffs at his pipe, to make sure that it would not fail him, and began:

"It's a long story, my friend, a long story. I have lived many years and they have been full of adventure. I was born at Dijon, in *la belle France*, near the close of the reign of *Le Grand Monarque*. My grandfather, and afterward my father, was master of the King's

hounds, and the greater part of my boyhood was spent amid the gaieties of the most magnificent and profligate court of Europe."

"And how came you here?" asked Norvell, showing in his manner the surprise he felt in finding in this isolated spot on the western frontier, and in the person of his unassuming host, a scion of French nobility.

"Ask the faded leaf that floats in yonder current whence it came and why, and you get my answer," the old man replied, a smile hesitating, shamefaced, on his lips. "I came with the wind and the current, my friend. I grew up wild. I gave myself to all the excesses of a gay court. I became a spendthrift, a rogue, a *mauvais sujet*, a plague to all honest men and women. I joined myself to a band of roving fellows and went carousing from place to place, robbing good people and spending my ill-gotten gains in wine and gaming. At last, one day, when reduced in purse and character and cast off by my father and friends, I heard of fortunes to be made in the New World. Here was my opportunity. I would begin life again, far from the old haunts and the companions that dragged me down. A company of traders sought men to go into the wilds of Canada. I offered myself and was accepted. I had spent much of my life in the forests. No form of adventure was new to me. The life of a *coureur de bois* suited my fancy and my talent. I came to this country. Years I spent in the forests of Canada, and other years as a boatman on the St. Lawrence. With the growth of population in the older settlements

I became restless, and pushed on alone into the wilderness. For years I lived among the Indians as one of them. I adopted their dress and their life. I married among them and was happy. I got along well with them. I liked them and they liked me. I trapped the winter long, and in the summer I boated my peltries to Montreal, avoiding the military posts and the agents of the trading companies. I made much money and spent it. Then I went back into the forests again or led trading expeditions to the northern lakes. The time came when the quarrels of the French and English over their rights in the newly discovered lands arose. At the time Montcalm fell wrapped in the banner of France, I lived in Detroit. I took an oath that never should an English flag fly over my head, and, packing my few possessions on a raft, we, Mintinao and myself, made a new home here where you have found us. For nineteen years we have lived here. Jacques was born here. A few of the older Indians come to see me; but no English, and few French. The Indians remember Jean Guion, their friend. They eat his bread and smoke his pipe. But one by one the faithful, honest red men are disappearing. They are selling their lands and themselves to the redcoats. Once, twice they have tried to burn my cabin and kill me, but my friends among them, they warn me, and I watch."

Now the conversation turned on the ways and means by which Norvell might gain an entrance to the fort, examine its defenses, seek out his sister if living,

and return in safety. It seemed highly desirable that some one inside the fort should be found who would aid in the enterprise, and Jean thought of Antoine Moreau, a friend of his early years in Detroit, who was suspected of being, if not actually hostile to the English, at least not friendly; but Antoine was a trapper and guide who spent the greater part of the year in the woods or on the river, and he might not be at home; Jacques would learn the fact on the morrow.

To get into the fort was no easy matter. Since the trouble at Vincennes and the going away of Hamilton, strict guard had been kept over its approaches. There was a population of but a few hundred souls, and there were few travellers unknown to the officers of the post or unable to give a good account of themselves from official sources; hence a spy had small chance of gaining admission without being apprehended. Norvell saw that it was useless to attempt an entry in disguise under the keen eyes of these pioneer soldiers, but, once inside the fort, by the assistance of a friendly inhabitant, he might hope, by using caution, to mingle with the people and learn their sentiments and their resources, and perhaps find some trace of his sister, whose Christian name even had gone from his memory.

“Well, my good friend,” Norvell finally exclaimed, after a prolonged discussion which promised no definite results, “leave the matter to me. I shall yet catch them napping. Robert Norvell has not come all this

long journey to beat a retreat when in sight of the prize. Should I go back now and say that I had heard the trumpet-call to guard-mount in Fort Detroit as it floated to my ears from across the river, and that the task I had set out to do was impossible, I would be laughed out of the ranks, if not court-martialled for cowardice. Robert Norvell has never been charged with that. I shall enter Fort Detroit, and that, too, within forty-eight hours. Let us change the subject. 'T is a dangerous one for us both. I want you to tell me of the days when you knew my father. I recall little of him save his look and his words at the moment of his cruel murder. I remember little of Detroit—I recall the high picket fence about it, its narrow, dirty streets, its beach on which I played with mimic boats, its high bank, and the rude steps that led to the higher ground. I recall a sluggish creek that ran through the town, on the banks of which were modest cabins with trim little plots of grass. Great trees lined the river bank and the slope that led back to a sort of ledge from which the ground rose again to a higher level. The Church of St. Anne stands out in my memory, and a little cemetery adjoining. All else is blank."

"And a good memory you have, monsieur! But do you not recall the mansion of De la Mothe Cadillac? It stood just on the second rise, surrounded by stately trees and overlooking the river. It still stands to remind us of the gallant gentleman and soldier who planted here, three-quarters of a century ago, the Lilies of France. For over fifty years that banner waved

over a happy people. Some of them were rough, and some were ignoble, but they were loyal to France and to one another. In the main they lived simple lives, at peace with the Indians and in the fear of God."

"I have often felt," said Norvell, "that a great difference lay between the French and the English pioneers. Consider the early settlers of New England. They came to rid themselves of oppression and gain freedom of action in spiritual things. Loyalty to king with them was secondary. First they sought a home where they might work out that dream of individual liberty which led their ancestors to wrest Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights from their kings. The early settlers of the New England coasts were the successors and heirs of the followers of Cromwell. They were loyal to the king, but only so far as this was consistent with the good of the individual and that individual's good conscience. They came to make a home for themselves and their children. You Frenchmen, on the contrary, had no notions of individual liberty. You had not yet learned, what now in France the people are being awakened to through our war for Independence, that the people have rights which even kings must respect. You bore the fifty years of oppression under Louis the Grand without a murmur, and even those hardy adventurers who came to this New World and tasted the sweets of a hitherto unknown freedom got no notion of individual independence, but continued to give ready obedience to an oppressive home government.

“You Frenchmen came not to make a home so much as to plant the banner of France on new soil, build forts, and hold them for your king; hence, while the English found their homes along the coast, you pushed on across the continent, making friendly alliances with the Indians. Your priests carried the cross of Christ, and your soldiers the banner of France, even to the sources of these great rivers. You seemed to know no dangers. You opened trade with the Indians, and to secure it you erected trading-posts and protected them by forts. Your missionaries, with a zeal for converts my ancestors on this continent' never knew, underwent martyrdoms the most wonderful in the annals of history, but it was all in the name and for the glory of France, and France was Louis. You treated the Indian humanely and as a brother. We looked upon him as a heathen, and dealt with him as such. You cared little for agriculture and were poor farmers. But agriculture has been the source of the prosperity of my race. You hunted, and trapped, and traded wherever you could with greatest profit, always with a hand reached out in friendship to the Indian. All this has borne its legitimate fruit. The English colonist, having risked everything for his conscience sake, having builded with infinite labour and suffering a home for himself, having breathed the air of freedom on these shores, and having an inbred hatred of oppression, met the tyranny of King George with the doctrine, new to the world at large, but not new to them, of the divine right of the individual, not

only in matters of religion, but in matters of government. Before the hard head, the strict conscience, and the home sentiment of New England, it was inevitable that the spirit of trade and adventure that characterised the early Virginia settlers and the French *émigrés* generally should give way. It was impossible that two such streams should mingle peacefully. One must dominate; and in the providence of God the spirit that sought out America as a permanent home, that began by felling timbers and tilling soil, and building school-houses and places for the worship of God, was to prevail. America owes much to the intrepid Jesuit priest and the French trader who went ahead to point the way, but the spirit of their enterprise could not prevail. No, my good friend, it is God's will. France is to-day learning her mistake. Multitudes in your country are flocking to the standard of the new republic on these shores, not from a spirit of adventure, but thrilled at the spectacle of a people fighting for their rights against tyranny in high places. What all this portends for France I cannot say, but Louis XVI. may well beware."

The old Frenchman sat with bowed head. He felt in his heart of hearts that all of this was true, that his native land had reaped the fruits of its planting, and that an unseen hand was leading this new land on to its destiny.

"I had fondly hoped," he said finally, "to again see the flag of France waving over yonder fort, but I now see that it is for ever impossible. It will be—it must

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be the banner of the New Republic. It is God's will. And it is better."

"Spoken like a man and a patriot!" exclaimed Norvell, rising; "and now let us drink and to bed. There is one of us at least who has business on the morrow. So here's to the Frenchman who fights for American Independence!"

The old man extended high his cup and in tones of intense earnestness exclaimed:

"And to George Washington and the Continental Congress!"

CHAPTER V.

THE second day of Robert Norvell's stay in the cabin of Jean Guion was spent by him in anxiously awaiting the return of Jacques, who had taken his fish to Detroit, promising to bring home, in exchange for them, a complete outfit for Norvell—flannel shirt, trousers, leggings, shoes, belt, and leather cap such as was commonly worn by the Canadian boatmen of the period. The new outfit was necessary, for in the matter of clothing the man was reduced to the last extremity. The boy was also to bring word from Antoine Moreau that should decide whether Norvell was to find an ally within the fort. The wait seemed endless to the soldier, who now burned with a feverish desire to complete his enterprise. Rested and eager to push on, he felt, too, that every moment he spent with Jean Guion added to the risk the latter was running in his behalf.

Had not Jacques taken the only boat, Norvell would have been sorely tempted while waiting to row down to Grosse Ile, if but to get a glimpse of its green shores and perhaps be able to feast his eyes on the very spot where he had bidden the French girl good-bye. As it was, he walked up and down the shore, looking first up the

river, to catch a glimpse, perchance, of the swarthy half-breed and his boat, and then down the river, half hoping that a beautiful vision—an Aphrodite—might rise from the waters and beckon to him. Then he turned on his heel and said to himself, "I have other business than wooing. Another day, and I shall be an arrant coward. Love truly unfits men for war. I must dismiss this Felice Constant from my mind."

Frequently, through the day, Jean Guion hastened to him with a new plan or suggestion, and no amount of dissuasion on his guest's part quieted the old man's apprehensions or gave him confidence that any other plan than one he should work out could succeed. On two occasions during the day he hurried Norvell up the rude ladder into the loft of the cabin, on the appearance upon the river of a canoe or fishing-boat from Sandwich, the French settlement a short distance up the shore. Norvell laughed at his fears, but the old man was insistent, so he climbed to the hiding-place, to remain till the voice of the Frenchman bade him come down, as the danger was past.

Jacques did not return till nightfall, and when his canoe came in sight the two men standing on the shore and straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of it through the gathering gloom noted that Jacques was not alone. The first thought with Norvell was that Jacques had played him false after all his assurances, and that he was bringing an enemy down upon him, but the fact that there was but one beside Jacques in the canoe served to dispel this thought.

It was not till the craft came to land that Jean recognised his son's companion as an old Indian whom, years before, he had befriended. Jean greeted the newcomer warmly, and, leaving Jacques to pull the dugout ashore and bring the bundle containing his purchases, the three repaired to the cabin.

The meaning of the Indian's visit was not at once apparent to Norvell. Jean and his visitor talked in a tongue that was largely unintelligible to him. Jacques, who soon put in an appearance, stood by seemingly dazed and stupefied. There was that about the words, gestures, and looks of the three that meant trouble, and the soldier at once concluded that it all related to himself, but he waited, his curiosity meanwhile strained to the utmost. Suddenly the old Frenchman turned and approached Norvell, who had seated himself at a respectful distance. His dark face seemed to grow pale and his hands trembled.

"Monsieur, I have bad news."

"For me?"

"For us both. Antoine Moreau is in the woods. Jacques did not see him. That is bad for you."

"It matters not, good friend," answered Norvell, relieved. "Let that not trouble you."

"But listen! Jean Guion's cabin will be burned to-night, and that is bad luck for him."

Norvell looked at the faces of the three men. Each told a tale of grave apprehension. This was no light message, then, the Indian had brought.

"They are going to make clean work of it to-night,"

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he went on. "They will have poor Jean Guion at last. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*"

Norvell turned a questioning look on Jacques.

"My father say true. Him tell me," pointing to the old Indian, who stood gravely apart. "Him tell me. Him say go home with me. Him come in canoe. Him tell me partee Sandwich to-night. The English come from Detroit to dance. Soldiers get Indians drunk at partee, come down river—kill Jean Guion—burn cabin."

"Devils! Impossible!" cried Norvell, with flashing eyes and clenched fists. "This is not war; it is murder. It shall not be. Here, Jean Guion, what weapons have you?"

The Frenchman pointed to a corner in which stood two muskets, and from a shelf he produced two red-handled scalping-knives, such as were used by the Indians. Hundreds of these knives had a short time before been shipped to Detroit for distribution among the Indians, and these two had fallen into Jacques' hands.

"And powder and ball?"

The Frenchman produced from a hook behind the door two horns of powder and a bag of shot. Norvell picked up the muskets separately, examined them critically, and sighted them through holes in the sides of the cabin.

"Good! We shall be ready for them. Can the woman shoot?"

"*She can hit an elk's eye between winks,*" replied *Jean proudly.*

"May we count on the Indian?" he asked, pointing to the newcomer.

The question being repeated to the dark figure that stood wrapped in a long, vari-colored blanket, likewise part of the last distribution of stores at the fort, brought a grunt of assent.

"Very good! There will be four of you, well armed and well protected. You can here keep off an army of English and drunken Indians. As for me, I'll do some scouting. There will be one guest at that ball who was not invited. And, mind what I say, there will be no burning here to-night, or my name is not Robert Norvell." So saying, he took the bundle of clothing Jacques had thrown upon the floor, and, bidding the four adieu, he hurried away from the cabin toward the river.

The little settlement at Sandwich was one of the earliest formed in the New World. It lay on the Canadian side of the river, a few miles below and in sight of Detroit. Its inhabitants were almost wholly French, many of whom, on the surrender of Detroit to the English in 1760, had found here more congenial surroundings among men and women of their own race. Still there remained a lively communication between the two settlements, principally of a commercial character, some social visiting backward and forward, and a show of real courtesy and neighbourliness. The Sandwich settlement had nothing to fear from the fort so long as in the struggle with the American rebels its inhabitants played a neutral part, and it had much to

gain from the protection of the several hundred soldiers in the fort and its half-dozen big guns, in case of trouble with the Indians. In the main, Sandwich people were loyal to the English flag, to which now, nominally at least, they owed allegiance, though their loyalty took a negative colouring from their not being able to forget that once the French flag floated where now floated the flag of their hereditary enemy. A few secretly longed for the success of the American arms; others openly boasted of their sympathy with the rebels.

Among these latter was Jean Guion, living just below the settlement, who was known to have lost his possessions on the surrender, and, for his outspoken attacks on the invaders, to have been practically driven out of the colony. He had not set foot in Sandwich in nearly twenty years. But few residents of Sandwich then living knew him personally, and these few kept away from him, for fear that his sharp tongue might call down suspicion on themselves. Several times secret expeditions had been sent out from Detroit to fetch in the old man's scalp; but despite the fact that Governor Hamilton had written from Detroit in January, 1778, to General Carlton, that the parties sent out from Detroit had brought in twenty-three prisoners and one hundred and twenty-nine scalps, and again in September, 1778, that since the preceding May the Indians of the Detroit district had brought in thirty-four prisoners and eighty-one scalps, an astounding number as compared with the population of the dis-

trict, yet no savage brought in the scalp of Jean Guion.

Protected by Indians among whose tribes his name was held in high esteem, holding no intercourse with his neighbours, excepting through his son Jacques, who came and went unmolested, as an ignorant, harmless fellow with no opinions of his own, the old Frenchman seemed to bear a charmed life. The Sandwich settlement knew him as a hater of the English and a peaceable neighbour. Every Frenchman there secretly admired him, but few dared to make friends with him. He never came to the little church at Sandwich. He had no dealings with the merchants and traders. Hence it was that by no possibility could Guion or his son Jacques have been invited to a ball at which the *élite* of Detroit, including the officers of the garrison, were to be present. Indeed, had it not been for Jacques' errand to Detroit that day, the grand affair would have passed under his very nose without his knowledge. The discovery of the plot to burn his cabin and kill him on the night of the ball had come about by the merest accident. An Indian servant of an officer who was in the secret overheard a conversation regarding it, and repeated it to the Indian, who in turn had brought it, through Jacques, to the old man's ears.

The ball was to be held in a long, low building used for a part of the year as a storage-place for corn, peltry, and other things. It was built of logs split in half and plastered between, and stood as near the bank

of the river as the marshy shore at this point permitted. It was of one story, and had but one door and two small openings for windows, but the sash and glass were wanting. The young men and maidens had worked all day long scrubbing and mending the rough floor, building a raised platform for the musicians, placing candles at proper intervals against the wall, and backing them by reflectors that were to multiply and focus the light on the centre of the room. Festoons of leaves, hollyhocks, and wild flowers fell in graceful curves from the rafters, while layers of cattails, marsh rushes and grasses were tacked to the logs that formed the sides, obscuring, to some extent, their barrenness. Here and there on the green background appeared wreaths and bunches of bright-coloured flowers, tied with white and vari-coloured ribbons—the rankest kind of extravagance, as more than one thrifty housewife of the settlement declared.

When at last, on the approach of evening, the finishing touch was given to the ballroom, and those who had participated in the work had gotten into a heart-flutter of excitement for fear they would not be dressed in time to receive the august company from the fort, the candles were lighted “to see how it looked,” and some declared it was fit for a king’s coronation, and if so, it must be fit for Captain Lernoult and his officers and the gentlemen and grand dames and pretty damsels of Detroit.

There were a few, be it said, and there are always some such timid souls, who held the army and gentility

in such profound respect that they were not quite sure the effect was grand enough. Detroit was leagues ahead of Sandwich in the social scale, and more than one gentle heart in the humbler community fluttered a little with anxiety for fear they had fallen below what was due. The candles were then snuffed out, and soon in every modest Sandwich cabin the mysteries of the toilet were being celebrated by beaux and belles alike, for it should be known that the men in those days, even on the frontiers of the New World, inclined to dandy manners and dress. Powder and puffs, and wigs, and silken hose, and dainty handkerchiefs, and jewels on fingers, and fancy buckles on shoes, were not confined to London and Paris by any means; every ship that crossed the seas from European ports brought news of the latest styles and a full complement of the newest things to be seen in the salons and assemblies of fashionable Europe, to please the taste and tickle the vanity of the New World aristocrats, of which the settlements along the Detroit boasted many.

Scarcely had night fallen ere the exciting news came that boats were seen approaching from up the river. Candles were quickly lighted, the musicians took their places and began tuning up, while the whole company of young and old repaired to the rude wharf, partly as a mark of courtesy, but mostly from eager curiosity to see the fine ladies and gentlemen in their ball attire. Torches lit up the shore and sent a glow far out over the water. The lanterns in the approaching *bateaux* could be distinctly seen, and voices of mingled song,

laughter, and halloa came ringing merrily over the water, throwing every Sandwich heart into tremour of nervous excitement.

When the boats came into the glare of the torches, handkerchiefs were waved and boisterous greetings shouted. When, in another moment, they drew up alongside the landing, there was a merry scramble to greet acquaintances and to get the ladies ashore without wetting a slippered foot. The men from Detroit nearly all wore the dashing red of the English officer and were resplendent in epaulets and gold lace, with swords rubbed dazzlingly bright for the occasion. The ladies were pictures of loveliness in toilettes of silks, brocades, and light muslins, with high scoop hats decorated with flowing plumes and fluffy white veils festooned over the rim. They were of all ages, from the buxom dame of uncertain summers who came to chaperon the younger set, and yet had primped all day in anticipation, to the blithe young damsels whose round arms and swan-like necks needed no artifice or skill of maid to render them bewitching.

Captain Lernoult and his staff were greeted officially by the rotund, good-natured parish priest and the chief men of the settlement, and the ladies were presented with all the excess of curtsies and fine words usual to the time. Many were the mutual friends and acquaintances in the two parties, and the merriment was not long in getting into full swing after the formalities of greetings and introductions were over. A notable

and right merry company it was that filed up the narrow path from the landing-place to the ballroom.

As the head of the little procession reached the door of the long, low building, and headed by Captain Lernoult and his lady, entered the room, the musicians struck up the grand march. An officious old Frenchman, who looked positively fierce with his long moustachios and eyebrows waxed till they looked like spikes, and his hair brushed straight back and glistening—one who, by the way, had served as dancing-master in the two settlements since the time the grandmothers present were young girls—acted as master of ceremonies, and right well he filled his position, eclipsing anything ever heard of by his dazzling and intricate figures. If the decorations were crude, no one of the guests was ungracious enough to say so—at least aloud—and many and unbounded were the exclamations of surprise and delight at the miraculous transformation of the old building. Every Detroit beau insisted that the particular Sandwich belle whom he happened to be talking to at the time was the fairy that had planned the change, and it would be wrong to say that any of the damsels thus flattered resented the charge.

Wedged in the door was a motley crowd pushing to get a view of the brilliant scene; there were old men and women, too feeble to dance, who had not been invited, Indians, half-breeds, boys and girls of the shy age, not quite sure of a welcome inside, and not a few small children, with eyes wide open in wonderment.

Then the musicians stopped for breath, and a babble of voices filled the air. The older among the guests had found seats on rude benches about the walls, and were beaming on their juniors, while the latter chatted and laughed and filled the air with *bon mots* and *badinage*, not forgetting to make sure of partners for the *cotillon*.

The Sandwich men among the dancers made a brave show at an appearance, but, with the exception of a very few who boasted grand furnishings, such as flesh-colored smallclothes, white vests, silk stockings, and vari-colored coats, they suffered much in comparison with the brilliantly uniformed men from the fort. They were dressed in their best, but for the most part they came in the colored blouse, short pantaloons, cotton hose, and heavy shoes with bright buckles that made the regulation "dress-up" of the French Canadian.

All eyes indeed were on the dashing English officers and their ladies, some of the latter being dressed to a degree of splendour never before seen in Sandwich. The hairdressers of the fort—who, by the way, were very important and necessary personages—seeing that they advertised the fact that they could dress the hair of ladies in forty different styles, and that of men in at least a score of fetching ways, had evidently reaped a harvest during the day, for the show of curls, puffs, rolls, and well-dressed *perruques* was grand in the extreme.

The musicians on the platform never before had

wielded their bows with such dexterity, and Sandwich never before had been so happy and so gay. Figures and movements followed fast one upon another till even the older guests who came to look on went upon the floor and showed they had not forgotten the step and the curtsy.

Between dances the younger members of the party repaired to the open air, where in twos they lingered in dark recesses, or promenaded arm around waist up and down the path to the river and along the beach. Many a Sandwich maid here forgot her promise to her Sandwich lover, and many a Sandwich youth got hopelessly caught in a network of coy ringlets, sparkling eyes, and red lips, playfully spread for him by a coquetish Detroit damsel.

CHAPTER VI

DURING one of the intervals between dances, Robert Norvell stood on the beach below, his form concealed by a clump of bushes, awaiting an opportunity, when all should be lost in the delirium of the dance, to approach the building unobserved. Suddenly he heard footfalls beating lightly on the sand. He crouched low, for whoever was coming was almost upon him. There were voices—a man's and a woman's—the former earnest, imperative; the latter pleading, tearful. The footfalls ceased. There was a quick movement as of a struggle, a smothered cry, a voice of entreaty, then the words of a man, trembling with passion:

“Doris! I swear that I love you, and by God you shall be mine to-night.”

Norvell leaned forward breathlessly. He could not hear all. There was a woman's cry for pity, full of anguish.

“Oh, I cannot! Let me go!”

“You must!” exclaimed a man's voice, fierce and imperative. “You have once too often flaunted your beauty in my face. You have led me on to this by your saucy, tempting lips and your siren eyes. You

have played with me long enough. I will have you now, willing or unwilling."

"You wrong me! Help! Help! God save us both!"

The cry had scarcely left the girl's lips ere a dark figure stood poised for an instant over the two, and then the man lay writhing for a moment on the sand and with a low moan lay still.

"Take that, you rascal! And be sure the next time you play your devilish tricks you have no one but a woman to play them on. Pardon, mademoiselle, we are strangers. I count myself fortunate to have met you at this time. May I accompany you back to the ballroom? We will leave this scoundrel here to nurse himself into dancing condition, which I fear will take some time."

"I thank you. I cannot tell you how much!" The girl's voice trembled. She took the proffered arm. "Let me walk slowly. I am faint. You are very, very kind. I am a foolish woman. I should have known better. That man——" she turned half in fear, as if she heard him following, then, stopping suddenly, she asked, "Is it just right to leave him? He may be dead!"

"Has he earned your consideration?" asked Norvell.

"No, God knows; but it seems terrible not to help him now."

"Your words bespeak a good heart—better than I can boast of. Such fellows are better dead; but I will care for him for your sake. He is only stunned, I think, though death was in the blow. He deserved it."

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"You are very good! May I know who you are, that I may seek some way of repaying you?"

Before answer could be made, two men appeared in the path directly before them, having stepped quickly from behind a tree, where they seemed to have been hiding. One, addressing the young woman in a hoarse whisper, asked what had become of Lieutenant Skelton.

"We saw him leave the ballroom with you."

"I think," answered Norvell, "you will find him on the beach. We saw him last there—cooling off, I imagine."

"If you see him, tell him we are waiting for him up at the spring." Then the two men passed on toward the river.

Norvell's heart gave a bound. A sudden ray of hope flashed over him. Here was a clue.

"May I ask," he said, as the men passed beyond sound of his voice, "if you know of anything this Lieutenant Skelton has to do to-night with these men that they should wish to meet him at this hour?"

A convulsive shudder shook her from head to foot. She withdrew her arm from his. "I must go," she said, with fear in her tone. "I can find the way alone. I will try to see you again to thank you. My father will——"

"But," exclaimed Norvell earnestly, at the same time seizing her hand, which was cold and trembling, "you must not go till you have answered my question. I feel that I have a right to ask it. You know some-

thing that I came here to learn—you possess a secret. It came to you without your seeking. You promised, without knowing, in a light moment, not to reveal it; but you must tell it to me. Remember I saved you from that man. I demand a reward—that secret. You cannot dance while a poor old man is dying amid the ashes of his cabin.”

It was a stab in the dark, but it hit the mark.

The girl drew back as if struck in the face. Impulsively she grasped the man’s arm.

“You know it. You know my secret. Oh, it is awful! That wretched man told it to me as we walked on the beach. He thought to gain my favour by telling me his horrible purpose. Killing has indeed become a virtue in these terrible days. I told him how my heart revolted at the deed. He became angry and charged me with being a rebel, and threatened to kill me if I breathed a word. ’T was then that, fired with unholy passion, he sought to do me further wrong.”

“I knew,” said Norvell, after a slight pause, “that you were an unwilling sharer in the dastardly secret. You do not speak like one who would hold the life of an old man in her hand and destroy it wantonly. You are good and pure.”

“Holy Mother! Would that I were good! This awful thing has been burning my heart out, but I dared not speak it even to you—my deliverer. I would have gone on and left you here, and carried the horror of it through the night. Listen! I will tell you all, and perhaps we can—you can save Jean Guion’s life.”

"Yes, dear lady, go on. There is no time to lose. I have been every moment expecting the signal from down the river that the attack has begun. So speak quick."

"They will not go without Lieutenant Skelton," she replied, "and he is—perhaps dead. They were to meet—this lieutenant and the two men who just passed—at the springs back among the trees. A small party of Indians followed us from Detroit. They were to land a little way up the shore and join these men at a place agreed upon. The Indians did not know the exact nature of their mission, else they might not have come; for Jean Guion is the friend of the Indians, and they will not hurt him. Whisky was to be given them freely, and these men were to lead them, at a time when they least knew what they were doing, to his cabin, set fire to it, and kill the poor old man as he attempted to escape. Oh, it is horrible—horrible!" She buried her face in her hands, as if to hide the sight from her eyes.

"And what has this old man done that he should be thus cruelly murdered in his own house without the chance to defend himself?" asked Norvell reproachfully.

"He is a rebel. He hates us English."

"And should he be murdered for wishing the land rid of those who took it away from his people and robbed him of his own, and would kill him?"

His voice was sternly sincere.

"Oh, I do not know," she said despairingly. "I

am but a woman. I cannot fight. I can only suffer. Would God these days of blood were ended——”

“——and this land were free,” added Norvell fervently.

The girl gave her companion a rapid look. Her quick wit had caught the meaning of his words.

“You forget, sir, that I am English.”

“And yet thousands of English on both sides of the ocean would rather see my wish come true than see their country dishonoured. I, too, am English, and it is because of that blood in my veins that, rather than submit to oppression under that flag on yonder fort, I would pull it down and trample it under foot. Oppression does not rest well on a true Englishman’s soul. Liberty first, loyalty afterward.”

“Why, how earnest you are!” the girl exclaimed. “Indeed, I could almost think you the chief of rebels—or a spy.”

“And if I were?” he asked, looking intently at her.

“I suppose it would be my duty to give the alarm,” she answered, half facetiously.

“But you would not!” he said quickly.

“You are brave; you have been very kind to me. I would not like to see you in trouble.”

“But you would do nothing to keep me out of it?” he pressed half-questioningly.

She hesitated. “Yes—I would. You saved my life—my honour. I would do much for you. But you are not a rebel, are you?” The question seemed freighted

with heart-throbs. Footsteps were heard approaching.

"Hush!" he said in a whisper. "We must not stay here. I will see you again to-night. Go, enjoy the dance. Jean Guion is safe."

The girl slipped away and was soon the centre of a group of her admirers, parrying with consummate skill sly questions as to her whereabouts during the half hour just past.

Norvell stepped aside just as the two men who had passed them going down to the river, a moment before, returned. Their conversation, carried on in muffled tones, was earnest, once rising to the point of anger as they stood for a moment within Norvell's hearing.

"Damn him! He got us into this, and now he shows the white feather. I'm in for letting the thing drop. I've got nothing against old Guion, anyhow. He never did me an injury."

"No, b' Gad!" exclaimed the other. "We 've started in; we 'll finish it. Where are the red devils?"

"Up at the spring, and they 'll stay there till the liquor's gone; then there'll be trouble. We had better get them away."

Norvell stepped out from his hiding-place.

"Pardon me, gentlemen, but I know your plans, and, as your leader has evidently played you false, let me take his place. I am an Englishman, born in these parts. I know Jean Guion, the rebel Frenchman. An adventure like yours is suited to my whim to-night. *If* your leader, whom you knew, has turned out to be a

coward, try one whom you do not know and prove his mettle if it do not ring true. Come, I'll show you the way to the old man's nest."

"It sounds all right, Stebbins," said one of the two to the other, after a pause. The other seemed not so well assured.

"How came you to know our plans?" he asked.

"No odds how I learned it. It is enough for you to know that I am advised as to the whole business. Perhaps your valiant leader whispered it in someone's ear for safe keeping, and that one whispered it again to another for safe keeping, till finally it came to me; or perhaps I overheard you discussing it between yourselves just now; you talked loud enough to be heard by any one caring a fig to listen."

"Or perhaps," broke in one, "that damned hussy who just left you told it. If she did, she 'll hear from Sam Parks. I know her; she's Neill Cameron's daughter. I'll choke that pretty neck of hers."

"You'll do no such thing, my friend," broke in Norvell, calmly but sternly, his whole frame tense with the effort necessary to keep himself from springing at the speaker. "I tell you now, once and for all, this story came from Lieutenant Skelton. If ill comes of the telling of it, call him to account. Brave men do not fight women, nor do they slander them. Come, make the best of it. I know the scheme. Let me in on it. Get me a musket. You'll find me a dead shot."

Thus urged, the two men agreed. Norvell entered into the enterprise with spirit, and, being the most

clear-witted one of the three, readily took the lead, the two others soon growing to look upon him as an accomplice to be relied on. Parks succeeded in purloining a musket from among those brought along by some of the visitors from Detroit, and the three went at once to the chosen rendezvous.

In a low spot among the trees, a little distance above the settlement, was a mineral spring. Here prostrate on the grass were half a dozen Indians in the last stages of intoxication, all more or less helpless. Here was an unexpected dilemma. Every effort was made to arouse them, but even kicking and cursing was of no avail. Then the three men fell to discussing the situation. Stebbins was for backing out; Parks for going on. Norvell cast his vote with the latter. A few copious drafts at a not quite empty jug gave the finishing touch to Stebbins's weakening courage, and now they were unanimous, Stebbins even boisterously brave. "And now, b' Gad, I'll fetch old Guion if I have to do it myself," he boasted. Norvell urged them on, to divert suspicion from himself, and hasten the consummation of his plan, which was to teach these fellows a lesson they would not forget; but he was sorely tempted to punish them at once.

A boat had been moored near by, ready for the expedition, and to this the three men made their way. Embarking, they were to drop quietly down with the current till opposite Guion's cabin, where they were to pull to land, creep quietly up the bank, fire the cabin in several places, and retire to await the old

man's appearance and then shoot him on sight. Liquor was taken along to lend courage.

Norvell took the only paddle there was, and seated himself in the stern, where he could direct the movements of the boat and watch his companions. The two men stretched themselves out on the floor of the boat, and, under the soporific influence of the liquor and the boat's motion, they were soon fast asleep. Hence it was they did not see that Norvell, after dropping down the river a few hundred yards, gave a few vigorous pushes with the paddle on his right side which sent the craft toward the middle of the stream, nor did they notice that they were rapidly approaching an island, which lay but a short distance down stream and above Jean Guion's cabin; nor, a few minutes later, did they feel the canoe strike the sandy beach and stop.

Norvell, immediately on the boat striking the shore, reached forward with his paddle and poked his sleeping companions; but it took several vigorous punches to arouse them from their stupor.

"Up, men. We are here. Quick now—no noise—out with you!"

The two men mumbled inarticulate words, reached blindly for their guns, and finally stumbling out on the beach, stood in the overwhelming darkness, dazed and stupefied.

"Feel about for leaves and driftwood for the fire, men, while I run the boat into a cove here and make her fast. I'll join you at once." With this he shoved

off into the water. In a moment the boat struck the current, and then, with a strong, exultant sweep of his paddle, Norvell headed it for the Canadian shore and was soon lost in the darkness. Ere the two men had thought to inquire what was delaying their leader, he was full a quarter of a mile away. Once or twice they thought they heard laughter coming out of the darkness, mingled with the words, "Brave men!" "Fight an old man!" "Cowards!"—and then all was still. At last it dawned on their muddled brains that they were alone—abandoned—and they knew not where.

Robert Norvell was an expert boatman. As a boy he had driven a canoe against the current of this same river for hours at a stretch, and in the years he had spent on the Ohio and later on the Potomac his arm had not lost its brawn or its cunning. On this occasion, spurred on by exultation over his success and by the hope that there was yet further good fortune in store for him, he made the boat fairly leap through the water, till soon it drew in to its mooring-place on the Sandwich shore. Dragging the boat high on the beach, he bathed his feverish hands and brow in the cool water, and then, true to his promise to the young woman, given an hour before, he sought out Skelton, whom he had left sprawling on the sand. He hardly expected to find the fellow, but while groping about in the darkness a voice came from a little way up the bank.

"Who comes there?"

"A stranger to you, Lieutenant Skelton, and one

who is looking for you. Two friends of yours have been searching for you and are grown anxious. They asked me to tell them if I found you. Is there anything wrong, sir?" Norvell's voice assumed an obsequious whine.

"Wrong! Of course not, you dunce—that is, nothing of any consequence. I fell over a confounded rock and bruised myself. I've bled some, but I think I've got it stopped; it's so dark I cannot tell. I am as weak as a cat. Got any liquor?"

"None, sir."

"Then get some, and be quick about it. Tell Steb—tell those friends of mine I'll not be with them. You need not tell them the reason."

"They have gone, sir."

"Gone where, you fool?"

"Down the river, sir."

"How do you know, damn you?"

"I saw them go."

"And where did they go?"

"To kill a poor old man, Jean Guion, in his bed."

"You lie! Ach, b' Gad! That cut has opened again. Get me liquor. Quick, man, or I'll bleed to death."

Norvell turned and left the spot. "Glad it's no worse, after all," he said to himself, "though I can't say the fellow does the world any favour by getting over it."

CHAPTER VII

NORVELL cautiously approached the ball-room. The *cotillon* was in full swing. He pushed aside the gaping crowd at the door and entered. No one of the dancers gave him more than passing notice. Attention might well have been drawn to the newcomer from his tall, manly proportions, but the average frontiersman of the day was not lacking in good physique, and the ball at Sandwich furnished many specimens of broad-shouldered, full-muscled young fellows. His clothes were such as were worn by the French Canadians of the day, and, though new, were not conspicuous.

If asked, Robert Norvell could hardly have given a definite statement of why he had returned to the Sandwich ball after having put out of the way Jean Guion's persecutors. To return the boat to its berth, to fulfill his promise given to Doris Cameron to look after the hapless Skelton, and to see her again, might be considered sufficient reason. Then, too, the loneliness of heart he had felt in the solitude of all these years was as nothing to the loneliness he felt now; he longed for society—for sympathetic, intimate companionship, as *the burning sands* lick up the momentary shower and

thirst for more. Reasons are not hard to find and are seldom looked for when one seeks excuse for following his inclinations.

He was sure he could recognize this Doris in the ballroom, and it were an easy matter to join her in the dance and whisper in her ear the story of his night's adventure and assure her of Jean Guion's safety—news which he knew she eagerly awaited; but to his surprise and chagrin he found himself, when once in the ballroom, utterly unable to identify her among the many figures, graceful of form and movement, that pirouetted and curtsied about him. He thought once he saw her, as a figure tall and straight as a dart, gracefully and picturesquely dressed, with a brilliant eye and splendid colour, passed him on the arm of her partner, but he could not be sure without hearing her voice.

Nor did Doris Cameron recognize in the newcomer, if indeed her anxious suitors gave her a chance to more than glance his way, the man who had taken her from the clutch of the libertine, Skelton; and it was not strange, for the night had been dark, her excitement intense, and her nerves unstrung. She thought she would ever remember that earnest voice that thrilled her through and through—so unlike that of the vapid coxcombs who fluttered about her and flattered her till she was well-nigh disgusted with men in general and these in particular.

But Doris Cameron was no prude. She was impulsive of speech and action, full of the warm blood of

healthy young womanhood, fond of a frolic, a constant temptation to dangerous familiarity, but an effective barrier against its exercise. She was conscious of her power over men, and wielded that power like a tyrant. Her face and figure were glorious in their freshness, and her manners fascinating in their unbridled freedom. She was a true frontier girl, untamed and heart-free. Born in these rude times and among rough men, grown up without a mother's care, she early learned self-command, and inspired a kind of respect that kept many a too bold suitor at bay. There was something in her brilliant, flashing eyes that showed unlimited reserve force, an ability to govern herself, and if need be to subordinate pleasure to duty, while her musical laugh, in which there was something of the dare-devil, beckoned men on. Serious men shook their heads; they feared her and feared for her. Silly men cursed their luck that they could get only near enough to her to realize what a heaven they missed. She had remained unmarried up to mature womanhood—a rare thing in those days when girls often married at fourteen and fifteen, and now presented a vision of ripe loveliness to men's eyes that was well-nigh irresistible.

Doris Cameron, flexile of limb, firm of bust, and elate of mien, with fine white flesh through which flowed blood pure as the air from off the meadows and the river, was easily the belle of the Sandwich ball. None looked so radiant, none danced with such graceful *abandon*, none flirted so dexterously and heart-breakingly, none was so often forgiven for wounds

inflicted as she. She knew it, too, and rejoiced in it.

At the moment Norvell entered the room she was showing scant courtesy to a dandified *passé* beau, with a short, paunchy body, who was trying to win her applause and favour by lifting his feet excessively high at every step of the dance, and was succeeding only in making himself ridiculous and working himself into an awful perspiration. Suddenly, in the midst of one of his prize efforts, the girl burst into a ringing laugh and ran away from him the whole length of the room, gathering up her petticoats as she fairly flew, and displaying shapely ankles and pretty feet encased in silk slippers, with an *abandon* that was excusable only in Doris Cameron. Dropping her feather fan in her flight, she bounded out of the door like a frightened deer through the wide-eyed throng of onlookers, who tumbled over one another in their hurry to make a way for her. Her partner, deserted at the moment of his supposed triumph, took up the pursuit seemingly unconscious of the laughter and badinage that followed him; and the crowd at the door, joining in the spirit of the adventure, closed in against him and effectually barred his progress long enough to allow the girl to lose herself amid the trees.

Soon the music ceased, and the dancers repaired to the open air and to the refreshment booth, where cakes and nuts and white wine for the ladies, and something stronger for the men, awaited them in hospitable abundance. Norvell went out with the others. His eyes

had followed the fleeing Doris with an interest intensified by the effect of her laugh on his ears. It was the clear, musical tone he had noted in the girl whom he had left a short time before in the darkness, and whom the rascal Skelton had called "Doris," and Parks had said was "the daughter of Neill Cameron."

The fan she had dropped as she ran had been rescued by Norvell from beneath the feet of the dancers, and must now be returned to its fair owner. Although he was among the first to reach the door when the crowd scattered, she had disappeared as effectually as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up, and no amount of searching in and out among the groups of men and women that moved about in the uncertain light of a few dimly burning torches enabled him to say the words he had formulated for her ears.

Norvell was not an over-susceptible fellow. He was just a man—normal, healthy. His nature was sympathetic and responsive—sentimental, perhaps, but not of the mawkish type, and keenly sensitive to true and beautiful things. Naturally he was of an ardent, buoyant temperament, such as loves to pour itself out unsparingly on what appeals to it. There had been lacking only the occasion. His life had been a starved one in its absence of heart experiences. Sorrow, privation, hardship, and, underneath all, resentment and revenge, had dominated his thought and his emotions. Felice Constant, the French girl of Grosse Ile, had once touched the hidden spring of his nature. In this girl's face, figure, and voice, love had found a way to

his heart over the wreckage of years; and even now, as he searched for the runaway Doris, an inward sweet sense of Felice came into his heart, and he wondered if by any chance this beautiful creature he was searching for might not know her and find a way for him to return to her; but—let us be candid—all this did not prevent a quickening of his heart at the present vision of so much unfettered loveliness as Doris Cameron possessed, nor make the pursuit of it the less interesting.

There was soon a general movement toward the door as the grandiloquent master of ceremonies appeared to announce a resumption of the dance. Norvell stationed himself near by and scanned each face as it entered, but the one he was seeking did not appear. Nonplussed, he stood for a moment considering where next to turn, and then moved off irresolutely in the direction of the river, but not by the path. He had taken but a few steps when he paused to listen. A stifled sob met his ears. Again it came, like a dull, piteous moaning. Walking noiselessly in the direction of the sound, he came suddenly upon a woman lying prone upon the grass, her head bowed almost to the ground. The very depth of wretchedness seemed to be crushing her to the earth. There was no chance to retreat, for she had heard him and was looking up startled. In the darkness he could not see her face.

“Pardon, lady, I did not know——”

“It is you!” she exclaimed, breaking his sentence. “Oh, I am so glad. I wanted to see you again. I am

a heartless, miserable woman." She arose quickly to her feet. "Tell me, what of Jean Guion?"

"He is safe and well.

"And those terrible men?"

"Safe and well, too, and out of the way."

"And is Jean Guion indeed safe?"

"Yes."

"God be praised! I have lived terrible years to-night, and yet I danced, and sang, and laughed with the rest. Oh, the horror of it! But, sir, I am not all bad. It came to me quick in there that maybe he was being killed while I, who knew all about it, danced and sang. Then I thought of you, so brave and so good to me. I felt that you could save him. I would find you. I ran out of doors and down to the river; then I came back here among the trees, where none could see me. Helpless and despairing, I flung myself down,—and here you have found me, and made me happy, oh, so happy. And Lieutenant Skelton?" The question had a tone slightly mischievous.

"I left him a short time ago under the bank yonder, nursing a bruised head," answered Norvell, laughing. "He is in no great danger; but he will not be able to meet his dance engagements, I fear."

"Will you not tell me now," she asked tremblingly, "if you are indeed the rebel you seemed when we last talked?"

"I do not know," he answered slowly and firmly, "whether I am the rebel I seemed. I am a rebel. I would drive into the sea every redcoat in the New

World. A new flag has been raised by Englishmen who love their rights, and I have come here to find a place to plant it on the citadel of Detroit in place of the one which now floats there, an emblem of oppression."

She stepped back; there was something in his voice that frightened her.

"A rebel, indeed! Oh, what shall I do?"

"Help me, Doris Cameron!"

"You know my name, then!"

"Yes, thanks to three brave soldiers of King George. Would that their mouths were closed for ever against repeating so pure a name again!"

"And you would have my help?"

"Yes—and you will not refuse."

Doris had never before met one who assumed to dictate to her a line of conduct. If these words had come from another she would have laughed at him. Before this man she felt weak—almost submissive.

"How can I? What must I do?" she asked, bewildered.

"You say you wish this shedding of blood were ended?"

"Yes, from my heart I wish it."

"Then never can your wish come true till America is free, or till every drop of patriot blood is spilled—till every voice that cries out against the cruel exactions of England's king is stilled in death. Doris Cameron, the soldiers in yon fort fight by command—some for personal glory—men like Parks and Stebbins

for pay. We on our side fight for home, for rights guaranteed us as Englishmen, for the sacred boon of liberty, for conscience. God is with us; and, with Him, wrong cannot prevail. He will not let a people be destroyed who have suffered so much and sought so long to avert a war."

"My father tells me the Americans are rebels. That is all I know," replied the girl meekly.

"And is that his only argument?"

"It—is all I remember," she replied, hesitating.

"And are you satisfied?"

"I had not thought it meant so much to—the Colonies—to you," she replied evasively.

"Our cause is dearer to us than life," he said solemnly.

"You will perhaps tell me more some day; then maybe I can help you." This seemed to come with a fearful effort. It was so tremulous it carried no conviction with it. The sincere, earnest voice of the speaker had taken her captive. It had produced in her heart a strange compound of admiration and fear.

"Yes, some day not far distant, and within yonder fort, you will help me," replied Norvell close to her ear.

"Within Fort Detroit?" She seemed amazed at his boldness.

"Yes. My object in coming here is to enter Fort Detroit and return to the American army with information as to its exact condition of defense, and with plans for its capture."

"Then I am to aid a spy?"

"Yes, a spy in the sacred cause of liberty against oppression, the weak against the strong. I sprang to your protection against one who sought to take from you your best possession—your honour. You thanked me. We of America are struggling in the grasp of a tyrant who would rob us of our honour, and when we struggle to keep this precious possession he sends his minions to shoot us down; and, forsooth, because we dare cling to that which God gave us as our own, we are rebels."

"Oh, sir," she cried, with a rush of overflowing feeling, "you may be right and I wrong. Forgive me. No one has ever talked to me like this. I have not known it all. I will help you. Set the task for me, and it shall be a joy for me to do it. There is something noble in the thought: For liberty! To save the honour of a people! Oh, I can at least do a woman's part. I can watch, and hope and pray——"

"And more," he added. And then he told her of the heroic women of the Colonies; of their fearless patriotism; of their courage amid perils and difficulties; of the women of North Carolina who solemnly engaged not to drink tea or wear any manufacture from England until the acts tending to enslave their country should be repealed; of Mrs. Schuyler, who set fire to her husband's crops rather than that they should fall into the enemy's hands; of the widow Nice, of Philadelphia, who, when the British soldiers quartered upon her complained of the butter served at her table, re-

marked that she could probably get better if she had a horse to ride out in the country in search of it, and who, being provided with a horse, secured her valuables and rode off to return no more till the town was in the possession of the Continentals. This and more he told her.

To this girl, shut up during these years of strife and confusion in the narrow confines of a Western fort surrounded by the King's troops, and hearing from Neill Cameron nothing but curses on the turncoat, renegade, scapegoat Americans, whom he had led her to imagine were scattering bands of desperate outlaws, these words, spoken with the self-command of a hero, the fortitude of one who despises suffering and courts danger, and without braggadocio, were a revelation. Her blood stirred within her at the recital of wrongs unrequited, petitions rejected, royal charters disregarded and annulled, offices handed over to foreigners and rights invaded; of armed forces quartered upon the people, their right of self-defense and trial by jury denied them, and their possessions confiscated; of battles where men fought for their very homes against hired mercenaries; of the ringing words of patriot leaders; of the immortal Declaration; and of the noble characters of the men whose lives were now devoted to the cause of American liberty.

"Oh, that I were a man, that I might stand with them in so glorious a fight!" she exclaimed. "What can I do? I am but a woman. I can at least be as *loyal as* those women you have named. I long to

help. Try me. Tell me what I can do." She looked up, clasping her hands, her eyes filled with tears, her lips quivering.

"I will. Listen! I am Robert Norvell, a lieutenant in the Continental Army. I am one of those who with Clark captured Vincennes and sent Hamilton and his staff in irons to Virginia. I have come to learn the resources of Fort Detroit. I must effect an entrance. You can help me. I wish also to find there a sister, if she be living, from whom, when we—she and I—were fatherless and motherless children, I was taken by the Indians. I wish to find the graves of my parents. In this, too, you can aid me——"

"And I will," she broke in earnestly.

"Then think! You are a woman, and women are quick in emergencies. Think how much depends upon our success—to the cause of liberty—to me. You have lived all your life in Fort Detroit. You know its weak points. Your woman's wit will find a way. Can you not get word to me at Jean Guion's?"

They were both silent for a moment; then she spoke:

"I will tell you a way. I have done it often in sport. At nine at night the gates are locked, and from that time on till morning a solitary sentinel makes the round of the enclosure. I live near the pickets on the west side, just at the edge of the river bank. Come there to-morrow night at ten. You will find a rope hanging over the pickets. I need not tell you more."

"You truly have a woman's wit!" exclaimed Norvell.

"Hush! They are seeking me. I must go now."
Her breath came convulsively.

“You will not fail me?” he said, taking her hand.

“No, Robert Norvell, for you have made me a rebel like yourself, and, God helping me, I will help you.”

He took her hand, and raising it to his lips with gallant courtesy, kissed it reverently, as if to seal their understanding. Her breath came quickly for a moment, and then she was gone. He listened till the rustle of her gown had ceased, and he had caught a glimpse of her on the arm of a man entering the ball-room; then he followed the path to the river, stepped into the boat, and quietly pushed out into the stream.

CHAPTER VIII

DAWN was just breaking when Norvell's canoe, floating down the river, came to land in front of the Guion cabin. There was no one in sight, and the cabin itself looked deserted. A knock on the door at first brought no response, but a moment later a voice, which Norvell recognised as that of the old Frenchman, called:

"Who's there?"

"Robert Norvell, a soldier of the Continental Army, and a friend of Jean Guion and all his kind," was the answer.

The bolt flew back and the door swung wide open.

"Enter, my friend; enter!" cried the old man heartily, showing by his manner the joy he felt at the soldier's return. Jacques said nothing, neither moved from his seat on the floor, which but a moment before had been his bed. His dull face betrayed no welcome. Impassive, too, was that of the Indian, who likewise sat bolt upright on the floor, his gun across his knees. The squaw lay huddled up in a corner, where she had slept ready on the instant to help in the defense, if an attack were made. The quartette had evidently spent

the night on guard, for each was armed and well supplied with ammunition, the whole interior of the cabin having the air of a castle prepared to stand to the last any assault that might be made on it.

Norvell greeted each in turn, threw his cap on a peg, and exhibited signs of the keenest satisfaction at being back among his friends and finding them safe and well.

“For shame, Jacques!” exclaimed the old man, looking reproachfully at his son, who had stretched himself out again on the floor. “Jacques, here,” he continued, addressing Norvell, “said you had played us false and had joined the English. What think you now, Jacques?”

“I think nothing. I care not for him,” he replied, scowling deeper; then he rolled his blanket about him and made as if going to sleep.

All through the night Jacques had urged and insisted that the stranger was but an English spy who had come to get evidence of Jean Guion’s disloyalty and his means of defense, and that having learned this he had gone to lead the enemy against them. He had pressed this so continually on the old man that the latter had come half to believe it; for why otherwise had the man left them in the moment of their danger, taking with him their only serviceable boat, by which alone they might hope to reach safety? Why had he so particularly inquired as to the ability of each of the party to help in the defense and as to their guns and powder? And yet the letter from Felice! “Felice no

write it. He fool her. She know him not," Jacques had said. Then Jean had struck a light and sought the note to read it again, only to recall that the stranger had hidden it in his belt and taken it away with him.

"It may be so!" the old man had said, shaking his head doubtfully, "and yet he came not like an English spy. He looked not like one. He talked not like one. I tell you, Jacques, he is not; he is an American, and he is playing fair with us." And thus the argument waged at intervals during the long night.

By turns each of the four occupants of the cabin stood guard without under the river bank, listening for the sound of oars or a footfall, until, near morning, having decided that the danger of attack had passed, they all rolled themselves in their blankets on the floor and slept. It was at this juncture that Norvell's knock had awakened the little garrison and brought the old man to the door.

Explanations were not made by the newcomer at once. He was not sure it was best to trust information of the night's doings to even the best of friends; and he was not quite sure that he could count on more than Jean as a friend at all. His confidences with Jean, he thought, had gone far enough, and with Jacques, he feared, quite too far. There was need of some kind of a story, however, as questions were becoming embarrassing, so he told them of his going to the ball to discover and, if possible, intercept the conspirators; of the inability of the plotters to execute

their plans because of the stupid condition of the Indians; and then he dismissed the whole subject with the assertion that the men from the fort were cowards, at the same time renewing his congratulations to all concerned over the fortunate outcome, never for a moment leading them to think that he had been instrumental in shaping fortune in their favour.

A steaming hot breakfast soon followed, and then pipes were smoked in silence all around, after which Jacques rowed the Indian across the river; but not before Jean had given the latter assurances of his lasting gratitude and ocular evidence thereof in the form of an elaborate belt of wampum which he had brought from Montreal many years before.

Norvell improved the day by taking a much-needed rest, for he felt that the experiences ahead of him would require all his powers of endurance, which had already sustained a heavy draft from the exciting and dangerous experiences of the days just past.

Jacques did not return to the cabin during the entire day. Brooding over his fancied wrongs, he was sulking—out on the river, paddling aimlessly about or lying asleep stretched at full length in some cool nook on the shore. Never once did the black, sinister look leave his face, and even in his sleep his brows were knit as if the demons of evil within him were taking advantage of the quiet for plotting mischief.

In the brain of this young savage had lain for some time a half-formed intention to kill Pierre Constant *and thus get possession of Felice*. The sudden coming

upon the scene of Robert Norvell had made a change of plan necessary. So long as Norvell was in the neighbourhood he dared not act. One thing he would do—and that, to-night. He would see Felice and find out where he stood. There might be nothing between the girl and this stranger. His savage heart could not rest till it knew the fact.

Waiting until the sun sank in the marshes beyond the river, he slowly dropped down the stream till he came opposite the faint light that shone from the lone Grosse Ile cabin. Then, swinging his boat to land, he soon stood on the shore. A coward at heart, he here hesitated. For the first time in his life he realised, to a degree, that his colour was swarthy, his hands big and dirty, his hair matted and unkempt, and his clothing slouchy. He found himself making a rough comparison between the frank, clean-visaged, soldier-like stranger and his own sneaking, disreputable self, and it made him angry; then he turned and for the first time that day dipped his hands into the clear water and threw it over his face. Then, while waiting for it to dry, he tried to formulate words in which to excuse his errand at so unusual an hour. He recalled the easy manner and courteous speech of the stranger, and his anger increased. He tossed back his matted, wet hair, set his teeth firmly, and strode up the path to the cabin.

There was singing within—the clear, sweet voice of a young girl, and the feeble, faltering one of an old man. It was a French love-song:

" Though young, and yet untaught,
 New feelings sway me now ;
 This love I never sought ;
 It came I know not how.
 Unknown its name has been
 Until this fatal day ;
 When we to love begin
 To love are we the prey."

" Thine accents seem to touch
 My soul, as with a charm,
 Thy words I love so much,
 They seem my heart to warm.
 Apart from thee I feel
 A blank through ev'ry day
 Will naught this anguish heal—
 Naught drive this love away ?"

Jacques had no ear for music. He was deaf to harmony. He had never heard a bird sing. The frogs croaking in the marsh below would have thrilled him as much. The song from within the cabin crossed the current of his emotions; it seemed to him a challenge, and he resented it. Advancing boldly to the door, he gave a rude knock. The singing ceased, and Marmjuda opened the door. Jacques crowded his big form into the small doorway, and, uttering a half-intelligible greeting, subsided on a bench on the side of the room opposite Pierre Constant and his daughter.

"Good-evening, Jacques," said Pierre, trying with immense difficulty to turn his chair so as to face his guest, his French breeding apparent in the courteous *gesture*, the inclination of the head, and the gentle

modulation of voice. Felice met the visitor's scant greeting with an affable word that almost died on her lips; she was afraid of this man, and she dared not trust her voice. His coming at this hour, his wicked face, his manners, ruder even than usual, boded no good, and she waited trembling for his next word. She was spinning; her white hands fed the ravenous spindle while one slender, arched foot, as fairly shaped as ever peeped from beneath a skirt, rested upon the treadle. She did not stop the measured movement of the wheel for fear her heart would stop beating. She wore a simple dress of flimsy material that fell about her slender, graceful figure in unstudied folds, displaying curves of chaste beauty. A white kerchief around her beautifully curved shoulders was crossed at the breast, exposing a glimpse of her throat, round and soft. Her hair, loosened, played about her forehead and temples in clusters, and fell in a mass of luxuriant colour to her waist. Her face was a rounded oval, with a clearness of eye and a softness of the cheek that bore witness to health and good breeding. Had this young savage been possessed of sensibilities, one might think the curve of her neck and bust, the delicate tropical colour of her skin, the ravishing aroma of her beauty had woven a spell about him.

"You come not often of late," said Pierre Constant after a moment of embarrassing silence.

"I busy," replied Jacques shortly, and looking furtively at Felice to see if his show of indifference had its intended effect. Her face was intent on the tiny

threads that came and went through her slender fingers. Another pause followed.

"You catch much fish?" asked Constant.

"Much. I make money; much money. I quit fishing. I go away. I go live at Detroit." Again from under his low brows the visitor peered at the girl. Again he got no comfort, and it whetted his ill humour. His eyes fairly burned as he fastened them on the delicate figure before him. The girl felt their piercing gaze intolerable. She saw she must speak or lose power of action, like a bird under the charm of a snake.

"You will come back, Jacques?" She seemed to be speaking mechanically.

"Never," he replied sullenly; then he continued: "No one want Jacques Guion. No one like Jacques Guion. He go away."

The girl made no reply.

"Your father will miss you, Jacques," suggested Constant. "Who will catch fish for him like Jacques?"

"He have squaw," replied the boy.

"We shall miss Jacques, shall we not, my daughter?" continued Constant, looking to Felice.

The girl felt the difficulty and danger of her position. She read the visitor's mind intuitively. But she must reply:

"We have too few neighbours not to miss one who goes. I sometimes feel that a new face would be a new earth—or a new heaven." This last she said wistfully, and then for the first time she stopped the wheel

and, looking Jacques squarely in the face, asked abruptly:

"Have you visited the fort these last three days?"

Jacques was off his guard. His mind habitually worked slowly.

"Yesterday."

"Any news?" asked Pierre, not comprehending the purpose of his daughter's question.

"Rebels take Vincennes. Hamilton prisoner. Rebels come here. Lernoult build bigger fort. He make soldiers work. I go. I help. I make money. I no come back."

"Vincennes taken!" exclaimed Pierre, starting up. "Your story, my daughter, has come true! But you would not help the British, Jacques?" he added reproachfully.

"For money, yes," he replied doggedly. "I make money. I care not for the English."

"And does Captain Lernoult fear the Americans will come to Detroit?"

"He laugh. He no afraid. He have all the Indians. He buy them."

"And some French, too?" asked Felice suggestively.

"I care not. The fish bite so well in English as French water."

"You are not like your father," said Constant.

"No! I like not fighting. I fish. I make money. I build cabin. I get wife." This last with a look of significant menace.

Felice felt the awful deep-set eyes again riveted on

her. She waited, fearful for the next word. She would turn the subject.

"Did not Monsieur Guion send us any word by you?" she asked, her heart beating so loud she could hear it.

"He say nothing. He know not I come."

"Is he alone?" She felt that her voice betrayed her anxious interest.

"He not alone. You know that. You send him. You write that letter."

The man had risen. His big form seemed to tower threateningly over the entire room. She dared not look at him.

"Yes, Jacques," she spoke tremblingly; "I wrote a letter to your father sending to him a brave man who needed his help. I——"

"A damned English. He fool *mon père*. I kill him. He not have you."

"Felice, my dear, what means this?" The old man tried to rise, but fell back in his chair, at the same time holding out an arm imploringly. Jacques stood directly over Felice.

"She fool Pierre Constant, too. She meet him at night in woods. She like him. She not tell you." He was now hissing his words from between closed teeth. "She meet him alone. She not tell you. She——"

"O Jacques! O father! You do not understand. This man of whom Jacques speaks is a good, a brave, a generous man. He comes from Vincennes. I told

you of him, father, that night, sitting at your knee. He fights for the Colonies. He is here on a mission of danger, to learn the defenses of Detroit. He does not love me. He has forgotten me. He will never, never see me again. I did no wrong. I gave him food. I gave him a letter to Jean Guion. You would have done the same, father. Come, Marmjuda, you know the truth. Are not my words true?"

"The squaw lie," snarled Jacques fiercely, not waiting for the Indian woman's reply.

The old man had risen, and now stood leaning against his chair, his daughter's face buried on his breast. The half-breed, his shambling frame shaking with passion, his long hair hanging about his thin jaws, stood glaring at the two like an enraged wild beast ready to spring. Then, addressing Felice, he cried:

"You lie, too! You love him. You run away with him."

"No, no, father; I love only you! Do not believe him."

Jacques crept closer. "You no like me?" he hissed.

"No, no. I do not. I loathe you."

"You marry me?"

"No, never," came the answer with a piteous cry.

"Then I kill him." He pointed across the river in the direction of the Guion cabin, and at the same time moved toward the door. Felice advanced toward him, her white face lifted appealingly, her heart beating in an agony of dread, her voice choking:

"No, Jacques! kind, good Jacques! He has done you no wrong. He is fighting for the cause we love—for us."

"Yes, by God, he do me harm. He steal you. He steal my wife. He laugh at Jacques Guion. No, no, I kill him. I go quick. I come back. I bring your lover. Ha! ha!"

The girl fell to the floor at the man's feet, begging piteously, while old Pierre Constant stood dazed and stupefied, muttering incoherent words. Suddenly the half-breed raised his fist to strike, and Marmjuda glided between them. The blow fell on the Indian, and she fell in a heap on the floor. Then Jacques rushed to the door. Flinging it open, he cried in a frenzy of rage:

"Ah, ha! I kill him. I sink him in the river. He float down to Grosse Ile to his sweetheart. Felice marry him then. Ah, ha!"

Then he was gone, and the cabin was still save for the low moaning of the prostrate girl. Old Constant kneeled and bent feebly over her.

"Felice, Felice, my dear!"

She raised to her father's face her own that was full of wretchedness.

"You love me still? You believe me good and pure, my father?"

"Yes, yes; I know not what it all means, but I trust you."

"And will Jacques kill him?"

"I know not what he may do. He was angry."

FELICE CONSTANT III

“Then I must save him. Come, Marmjuda!” Her dark eyes shone with fierce courage.

The faithful Indian crept to her side. “Marmjuda, let us go.”

“It is too late, my child,” said the old man tenderly. Jacques is now well up the river. He is strong. Anger lends strength to his arm. It will do no good.”

“Then God protect him!” she cried, her hands clasped, and her face lifted as in agonising prayer.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE Jacques Guion was pushing his boat against the current in a frenzy of rage, bent on carrying out his threat against the life of Robert Norvell, the latter, having bid Jean Guion adieu, was making his way up the shore on foot toward the Sandwich settlement, happy in the thought that up to this time all had gone smoothly with his enterprise and everything augured well for his final success. He had parted with Jean Guion with feelings of real sorrow, for the old man was a rare spirit—good company, hospitable, true as steel, and withal a patriot. Jean had accompanied his guest for a full mile, repeating over and over suggestions and warnings. He must be certain to find Monsieur Moreau and his good wife Annette, with whom he would surely find shelter and protection; he must keep clear of Neill Cameron, the blacksmith—the name fell on Norvell's ear like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer—whose disposition toward all the enemies of England's king was something terrible, and who more than any one in Detroit had been the cause of Guion's leaving the settlement; he was to make his whereabouts known to Jacques *from time to time*, so that the old man might know

through his son that all was going well; and after his mission was accomplished he was to make his way back to Guion's cabin, that the latter might rejoice with him over his success. Then he had bade Norvell an adieu that was fatherly in its tenderness, while Norvell in turn had wrung hard the old Frenchman's hand and bade him make his adieus to Jacques.

As the traveler came within sight of the settlement at Sandwich the sun disappeared behind a low pillow of purple cloud; the glow in the west melted away; the line of the opposite bank became indistinct; and for a time, while the darkness gathered about him, he stood watching the evening fade away; then he approached the settlement.

Sandwich went early to bed, and all lights were out when Norvell crept cautiously along its water front. He stopped for a moment at the scene of the encounter with Skelton, to recall the face and voice of Doris Cameron, and then pressed on hastily, keeping his eyes open for a canoe in which to cross the river to the fort, that lay on the opposite shore several miles to the north. By good luck he found one that suited his purpose, and, pushing out into the river, he made for the opposite shore. Using his hands as paddles, his progress was slow and labourious. The current here was wide and powerful, and for every yard he gained in crossing he dropped two yards down stream; but finally he struck the sluggish waters off the marshy west bank and paused for breath.

The night was still save for the discordant croaking

of myriads of frogs in the marshes, but even this seemed music to his ears, for his heart was buoyant and eager. The air blew sweet from off the acres of green that spread back from the river.

His progress now was rapid; the light bark canoe rode the quiet water like a feather, obeying the lightest touch of its occupant. After an hour's work he reached the mouth of the Savoyard, a little stream that poured its limpid current into the greater stream just below the fort, and up this Norvell guided his craft. His heart beat high at the thought that on the banks of this little stream he had as a boy seined for minnows and taken his first lessons in swimming. Within a stone's throw of the very spot where he then sat his father's cabin had stood, in the time before the awful massacre; and on these very banks he and his little sister had plucked wild flowers and chased butterflies together. That sister! Perhaps she was even now here—behind the palisades that lay almost within his reach. Perhaps he should see her,—grown to womanhood, fair and stately as her mother,—a matron, perhaps, and mother of yet other children, flaxen-haired as was she in those early days! Would he know her? Her Christian name had long since passed from his memory, so young were they when they were parted.

He recalled a great tree which stood, in his boyhood, with its roots bare and spider-like extending into the water of the Savoyard. He pushed along the banks, hoping to find it. Yes, it still stood sentinel *over the stream* as then. Here he made the canoe fast,

and, springing ashore, found his way down the margin of the creek to the river, and thence along the edge of its bank to the palisades that enclosed the village.

Detroit at this time was well defended, as became the most important military post in the West. Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, who had been in command at Detroit for several years, was an active and able commandant, though a cruel one. He had made Detroit the centre of English and Indian activity in the West, and to this post ran constant streams of Indian allies asking and receiving provisions and stores, and pledging undying enmity to all the enemies of the King. To that post Hamilton had summoned several Indian tribes in council in 1777, and from that point he had sent abroad, along the frontiers, bands of painted savages to plunder and murder the settlers. He had offered standing rewards for scalps, but had offered none for prisoners, so his war-parties had spared neither men, women, nor children. In 1789 he had planned a confederation of the tribes to desolate Virginia, but his capture later in the year by the Americans prevented the enterprise. It was of importance, therefore, that Detroit, the centre of so much activity, should be well defended. The village itself lay along and close to the river, surrounded by pickets fourteen feet high, through which were cut loopholes for musket-barrels. In the rear of the village, on higher ground, stood the fort with its embankments and ditch surrounded by pickets, from which frowned several large guns. Hamilton had

planned to enlarge the fort, but his going to Vincennes had left the work to his successor. The gates of the village were shut at nine at night, and sentries stood guard while the inhabitants slept.

The garrison of the fort in the rear of the village was smaller at this time than usual, for a good portion of the King's troops had followed Colonel Hamilton to Vincennes, and none save a few from among those paroled by Clark on the capture of that post had returned. Captain Richard Lernoult had been left by Hamilton in command, supported by a few hundred men, mostly local militia.

Learning of Hamilton's resources, and hearing rumours of Clark's intended move on Detroit, Lernoult had renewed his attentions to the Indians, feasting them and loading them with presents, and had made haste to strengthen and enlarge the fort. At this time citizens and soldiers alike were busy chopping down trees, splitting and sawing them into suitable shape for sinking them into the earth, digging ditches, and throwing up embankments. The fort did not command the river, but the water front was patrolled at all hours, that no surprise might come from that quarter.

All of this was known in a general way to Norvell, who had learned it from the lips of Jean Guion. The unusual precautions now being taken were unfavourable to him; but on the other hand, in the bustle and confusion of the work of enlarging the fort, he hoped *to find*, when once on the ground, a better chance of *escaping detection*.

As he felt his way along the fence of pickets, measuring the distance as best he could from his starting-point near the water, and passing his hands over the rough timbers to find the rope which his fair confederate had promised should be there, he realised for the first time the danger in which this enterprise had placed Doris Cameron. "Was he doing a manly thing?" he asked himself. "Had he taken a mean advantage of the girl? Was she doing this for him? Did she realise what she was doing in thus aiding a spy?" Once he stopped. "Should he go on? Had he deceived this girl, by his manner or words, into thinking he cared for her? Was there sufficient reason, from her standpoint, why she should risk everything for him? To be sure, he had snatched her from a fate worse than death; but this impulsive woman, in speaking to him, had used words that bore no doubtful meaning. She was helping him that she might win his favour. Perhaps she little realised the results of her act—the revealing of the strength of Fort Detroit to the enemy. True, she had declared her allegiance to the cause of liberty, but had he not forced her to it? Was it right for him thus to play upon a woman's heart?" At this instant his hand touched the end of a rope, and the touch sent a thrill of joy through him that lent eagerness to his action.

"Well," he almost cried, "all 's fair in love and war, and this is war. This harum-scarum girl would as soon give me up to be shot if she took the notion. For aught I know this may be the very purpose at

the other end of this rope. At any rate, I'll explain to her when I am once inside, and give her the chance to repent. I'll show her the danger. I'll make it plain that I am but a rough soldier on a soldier's errand. If she repents, I can come out the way I go in. All 's well that ends well."

He pulled the rope till it was taut, then bore his weight upon it; it stood the test. A loop had been made at one end; this had been thrown over the point of a picket, and the loose end thrown over till it nearly touched the ground without. Taking off his shoes, he tied the end of the rope to them, and then, hand over hand, clambered up, bracing his feet against the pickets. It was desperate work; the rope cut his hands, and splinters from the rough bark penetrated his feet. Once the rope slipped, and he dropped back; then, by putting forth all his effort, he drew himself to the top, and, quickly loosening the loop, he threw down the rope and dropped to the ground within. In a moment he had slipped on his shoes and turned to look about him. Scarcely had he done this ere Doris Cameron stood beside him, her heart beating like the loud ticking of a clock. Saying nothing, she seized his arm and led him across a narrow street, then a few steps farther to the door of a cabin which stood open; this she entered, drawing him in after her and closing the door.

"You will stay here," she said in a hurried whisper.

"And you?" he asked.

"I will go to Madame Moreau, a neighbour. Here,"

she continued, leading him through a doorway, "is my father's room. You will sleep here."

"But your father?"

"He is with a company that went to the relief of Vincennes, but they started too late and are coming back. You are safe here to-night at any rate. To-morrow we shall see."

"Your father fighting against us, and you——?"

"Yes, I know what you will say," she said, with a shade of severity, "but you have made me the rebel I am. You should not now complain or upbraid me. Now I am going." Her breath came quickly.

"But do you know the danger to you in this you have done?"

"It is too late now to think of that. I have thought only of you and your words. You have given me this courage. In God's name do not take it from me now. I have risked all for you."

There was a moment of embarrassing silence. Then Norvell spoke earnestly:

"I must not remain here. It was wrong for me to ask your aid. No one has seen me enter. I can return by the same way, and no one will be the wiser. You must be true to your people. Your father will return. His daughter will meet him as a daughter should. You have more than paid every debt of gratitude you owe to me. Yet I have learned nothing through your aid, nor shall I. My mind is made up. Come, where is the rope?"

The girl stepped to the door, followed by Norvell.

The rope, loosened from its fastenings, had been taken by her, and it was still in her hands. They walked quickly across the narrow street.

“Before I go——” Norvell began feelingly, as they neared the pickets.

“Before you go,” the girl cried aloud with fierce earnestness, “you must get this rope!”—and ere the man could make a move it went whizzing through the air and fell outside the enclosure.

An exclamation of mingled surprise and entreaty formed itself on his lips, but the girl had turned and sped away into the darkness.

CHAPTER X

EARLY next morning, Jacques Guion, sullen and defiant, brought his dugout to shore at the Detroit landing, gave a scant acknowledgment to the greeting of the sentry, and made his way at once to the quarters of Captain Lernoult. The commandant was not at home, but was making an early inspection of the work on the additions to the fort, which was giving him much trouble, owing to the marshy condition of the soil, the embankments of soggy earth slipping and defying every means used for holding them in place.

The captain was on this particular morning not in the best of temper, as it had been reported to him that during the night a large section of the work had broken down, and days would be required to repair the damage. This was particularly unfortunate just then, as word had come by soldiers returning from Vincennes that an expedition to Detroit was even then in all probability on the road, and Colonel Clark had sent word that he was delighted over the enlargement and strengthening of the fort, of which he had heard, as it would save the Americans the trouble of doing it themselves later.

Jacques, when pressed by a subordinate to deliver his message to Captain Lernoult by proxy, doggedly refused, and nothing was to be done but take the boy into the presence of the captain. When found, that dignitary was in a hot and blustering mood, and poor Jacques, who knew little of military discipline and ceremony, plunged headlong into trouble.

"Salute, you cur," shouted the captain, as Jacques began abruptly to state his errand.

Jacques's attempt at saluting would have set any one but an angry man into convulsions of laughter, but Captain Lernoult saw nothing ludicrous in the performance.

"Again, you hybrid!" he shouted, red in the face.

Jacques was a coward at heart, and now he was numb with fright; he could not move a muscle.

The captain's attention was luckily turned at the moment to the efforts of a squad of men who were frantically endeavouring to roll a log to its place at the base of the weak embankment in time to stay another avalanche of mud and stones.

"Here, men, swing that end around quick, or the whole damned thing will give way. Now fill in rocks behind there and drive in some stakes." Then, turning to Jacques again:

"Now what do you want, you muskrat? I suppose that old rebel, Jean Guion, wants a favour. But, mind you, the halter's all I have for him, and it's all too good for him and his sneaking kind."

Jacques made another stagger at a salute.

"Go on, you ninny. Don't stand there working your arms like a manikin."

"I tell—you—something," began Jacques, frightened at the sound of his voice; indeed he had never heard it often enough to get entirely familiar with it.

"Well, speak out, you idiot! You look as if you had come to steal something."

At this there was a general laugh, for Jacques did look more like a criminal caught red-handed than an honest man doing what he conceived to be a duty.

"Robert Norvell—a spy—came to Jean Guion's two days ago. He bring a letter from Pierre Constant."

"That old reprobate again!" shrieked the captain. "Go on, fool, go on!"

"He sleep at Jean Guion's. He come from Vincennes. He see Detroit—he see guns—he see soldiers—he tell the Americans. They come with army to take Detroit."

"And where is this spy—this Norvell? Have you got him?" asked the officer, coming close up to Jacques and piercing him through and through with his keen eyes.

"He go away," answered Jacques, shaking.

"The devil! And why did you not tell me of this before? Two days in Jean Guion's cabin, and you let him get away? You ought to be hung, and b' Gad, you will be if in a week you don't fetch me word of him. Remember," he continued with terrible earnestness, "if in a week you do not bring me this Norvell, or information that will lead to his capture, I'll blow

you and your rebel father off the earth, though you're not worth the powder."

Jacques would have dropped in his tracks if he had not been petrified with fear.

"Describe this fellow," went on the captain.

"He no French. He English."

"Tall or short?"

"Tall."

"Fat or lean?"

"Not much fat. Not much lean."

"Whiskers?"

"No."

"What sort of dress?"

Jacques winced. He had bought Norvell's outfit himself.

"I know not."

"Know not? Answer, or I 'll let you feel the weight of this sword."

"*Voyageur*—boatman."

"Good. His name again?"

"Robert Norvell."

"Well, go now. Remember what I told you. Your life or this Norvell's, and within a week. Give my compliments to that old mischief-maker of a father of yours, and tell him hemp is cheap in Detroit. Tell him he may have visitors not so congenial if this thing continues. Here, Hubbard, see that this fellow has a breakfast and a bumper of brandy—none of mine, now, you rascal, mind you; then see the captain of the *guard* and warn him. We'll rake the town with a fine-

tooth comb and find this fellow if he's given us the slip and got in."

Hubbard saluted, and, motioning to Jacques, the two left the scene and the captain turned to his work.

Under the influence of brandy and jovial companionship Jacques found his tongue. To those about him, among whom were Parks and Stebbins, he told his story again with added particulars, exaggerating its details and woefully twisting the facts so that he himself even became the hero of the fight on the day of the fishing adventure. Encouraged by the feigned interest and applause of his companions, he lied about the scene in Pierre Constant's cabin the night before, and dragged into his vulgar narrative the name and person of the old Frenchman's daughter.

CHAPTER XI

WHEN Robert Norvell suddenly found himself alone in the yard behind Neill Cameron's cabin, and realised that escape from the village was impossible, he did the only thing left for him: he entered the house and proceeded to make himself comfortable for the night. And that, too, in the home of the one man in Detroit against whom Jean Guion had warned him!

While thus engaged there came again the suspicion that this Doris had after all merely set a trap for him, and that already, perhaps, the house was surrounded by redcoats. And he had flattered himself the girl entertained a personal interest in him! He would have laughed outright over the situation were it not so serious. Instead, he declared to himself that it was a downright pretty trick and worthy of a better cause.

Feeling about in the darkness for a place in which to sleep, he came to the door of Neill Cameron's room, and, entering, found it a small apartment not much larger than could contain a bed. This piece of furniture had evidently been made ready for an occupant; so, grateful for what promised a night of rest, he threw himself upon it. But sleep to one tossed to and fro

with such doubts and misgivings as bore in upon him was not a mistress easily won. After a vain attempt to close his eyes he found himself sitting bolt upright, again trying to solve the problem of Doris Cameron's actions.

Each way he turned he found himself confronted with the unlikely situation of a young woman apparently in her right mind, the daughter of a stern royalist, the belle of the village, the idol of the soldiers, in one night, at the entreaty of a stranger, deliberately turning her back upon all that was dear to her and becoming the willing tool of the enemy of her people. "It is too much to believe," he declared, and in a fever of uncertainty he threw himself down and closed his eyes to shut out the vision of the morrow.

Then his mind went back to his boyhood days and ran the gamut of his strange career. There came to him with startling distinctness the long vista of the past—that past that had offered him no rest, no peace, no love, no contentment; that began within an arrow's flight from this very spot with the murder of a father; that brought the shadowy face of a sister with outlines of wavy, sunlit hair, and dancing eyes, and feet that never wearied. The panorama of the intervening years rolled before him—years of toil and hardship and endless wandering, of vain hopes and unfulfilled purposes—his boyhood with the Indians, his young manhood as a boatman on the Ohio and the Potomac, his acquaintance with Washington and his service in the ill-fated expedition with Braddock; then he heard

again the call to arms against foreign oppression and saw the long and terrible march with Clark; then the day he stood forth a volunteer eager to undertake the dangerous mission to Detroit; and then the face and name of one whom he had come to know as Felice Constant. He summoned his every power to bring before his eyes the sweet vision of the island girl that had made for him his only earthly Paradise. Would he meet her again? "Oh, God," he prayed, "why have I been permitted to touch but the hem of this garment of happiness! Grant me but one more day of life. Life is sweet to him who loves. But yesterday and I would have thrown it away as a shell from which the worms had eaten the kernel. Now let me live!"

Then he fell to formulating what he should say when led out and caused to stand before the gaping, curious crowd and receive in his breast the death-wounds. Would she be among those who would jeer and mock the spy—this Doris? Would those beautiful, cruelly beautiful eyes hold no pity then? Surrounded by a laughing crowd of perfumed officers, would that haughty head not bow for one moment in pity for him and in regret that she had betrayed him?

Strange what labyrinths of trouble and perplexity we weave for ourselves? As if life were not full enough of tragedy, we busy ourselves setting the stage for more, and all the time we long for peace and rest. Not one hundred yards away from the cabin in which Robert Norvell was dreaming himself a prisoner and *already* condemned to death on the evidence of Doris

Cameron, that young woman was crying her eyes out on the pitying breast of Antoine Moreau's good wife, forsooth, because she was so happy in having done this man a service even at the risk of her life.

When Doris Cameron fled in the darkness, leaving Norvell no means of escape, she went straight to the home of a neighbour, over whose threshold, by the command of her father, she had never crossed. Madame Moreau had retired early, like a good woman whose spouse is away from home. She had arisen at the unusual summons, half suspecting that her liege lord had returned, and wondering at the lateness of the hour. Surprised beyond measure at the half-frightened cry—"It is Doris Cameron—please let me in"—she had opened the door and received the girl, sobbing convulsively, into her arms.

Neill Cameron's feelings toward his neighbours, Antoine Moreau and his wife, were bitter and relentless. Neill was the town blacksmith—a burly, hard-muscled, hard-visaged man with bristling hair and beard and a voice like a Jove. He was a man of set and determined mind—a good man after his light, but he had but one eye, and was terribly outspoken on every subject on which he had opinions, and this embraced everything in the universe. He was a brave fighter as well as talker. His loyalty to King George went further than refusing to lift his hammer for one who was the least tainted with political heresy; it went even to his shouldering a musket and going out into the wilderness to hunt the rebels who had dared come out

from the benighted Colonies and win a battle on Western soil.

He had a particularly strong aversion to Antoine Moreau. The Frenchman, whose humble cottage stood over against his own, kept the blacksmith's bile in a constant ferment. It was well for Antoine, holding radical opinions as he did on the questions of the war somewhat averse to those of Neill, that the former spent the greater part of his time hunting; otherwise, through Neill's machinations, there might have been one less Frenchman in the New World, and Annette Moreau might have been a widow. As it was, Neill Cameron had to take his spite out on Moreau's sole representative in the community—this unoffending wife, whose sole sin was loyalty to her husband in all things, and whose predominate qualities were her meekness and her ability to hold her tongue.

Around the cabin of Antoine Moreau, absent or present, Neill Cameron had drawn the awful circle of his displeasure, giving it out publicly, as well as in the privacy of his home, that no friend—not to say child—of his should ever enter its door. This had heretofore been no great hardship for Doris Cameron, for no one in the village was further removed by nature from her than Madame Moreau. In the first place, the latter was many years the senior of the former, and in the second place Doris was not meek and was not accustomed to bridling her tongue. The girl pitied the Frenchwoman in her quiet life of quasi-widowhood; but her pity never went so far as a desire to molest it.

The Frenchwoman pitied the girl because she thought her a heartless, hoydenish beauty with no thought beyond her pretty self. It was simply a case of oil and water—or perhaps, more appropriately speaking, of lion and lamb. So the edict of Neill Cameron was unnecessary in his daughter's case. She never had wished to go and never had gone to the home of Antoine Moreau.

By that strange perverseness of human nature which sometimes manifests itself, Doris Cameron, in her moment of grief and perplexity, ran as fast as her feet could carry her straight into the arms of Annette Moreau, and those arms proved big enough and warm enough to hold and comfort her.

"May I sleep here to-night?" she cried, as soon as she could trust herself to speak, lifting a face full of anxious fear, down which rivulets of tears were marking their way.

"Why, yes, child! Has something frightened you? I feared you would grow lonely with your father away. I had often a mind to speak to you, but——"

"Yes, yes, I know. You dared not. But do not speak of that. It is all gone now. I want—I need your friendship. Promise you will help me."

She grasped Annette Moreau's hand convulsively. Her voice expressed the mingled agony of fear and supplication. The woman bent over her as if to shield her against the shock of a storm.

"Yes! But what ails you, child?" the good woman asked tenderly. "Your hands are cold. You are

chilled. Lie down on my bed while I make a light and prepare you a hot drink."

"No, no, do not make a light. I dare not see myself. I have had a dream. I have done an awful thing. I fear only to be alone. Let me only sit down by your bedside. I will not disturb you. I will not cry or talk. To-morrow I will tell you all."

"Bless me, dear child, you shall not spend the night thus. You shall share my bed. Sit here till I get the brandy. You must take it. You are ill."

"You are very good to me. I do not deserve it," she replied more calmly. Then, as the woman looked for the flagon of liquor, the girl asked with startling abruptness:

"Madame Moreau, are you, too, a rebel?"

The question almost caused disaster to the liquor, so sharp and unexpected it came.

Madame Moreau made no reply. She thought the dream had turned the girl's head. She poured a portion of the flagon into a mug and felt her way back.

"Here, child, take this. It will warm you. There! Now let me chafe your cold hands. Is it so cold out?"

"Yes, very cold," she answered, a tremor running through her frame.

"I had not known it. It is early for cold nights. We shall have an early autumn."

"But you have not answered my question."

"What question, child?"

"They say you are a rebel. Is it so?"

"Would it drive you out into the cold if I told you *yes*? If so, I will never say it."

"It makes no difference now," Doris replied slowly.

"What a strange dream, my dear. But you will forget it ere morning, and then you will laugh at your running to Annette Moreau with your foolish question, and you will not come and see me again."

"You wrong me; indeed you do," cried Doris. "I have not been asleep this night. My dream is a waking one. It is real, oh, so real. But my question?"

"Well, if it may not drive you away from me, I will tell you, child, that my husband believes that England is wrong in this war, and I—I, too, think so. Now do not be angry. I know how your father feels—and you——"

"No, no, madame, not I, for I, too, am a rebel." The good woman dropped the hand that she was rubbing between her own two warm, generous palms, and stepped back as if a blow had been aimed at her in the dark. "Listen," the girl went on calmly. "All of the enemies of England in this war are good and brave."

"You speak as if you knew many, my child," returned the woman.

"I know you and your husband, and everybody knows you have good, kind hearts—and I know—bend down while I whisper it—I know one other—a man, a stranger, a spy!"

"Doris Cameron, what say you? You are beside yourself. Come to bed. This dream has put wild fancies into your head."

"No, no, dear madame, no dream is it save such as has entered my heart and head through these eyes and

ears. Yes, Madame Moreau, a spy. He is here, in Detroit."

"Where, child? Whence came he? What have you to do with him?"

"Almost within sound of our voices," whispered the girl in quick gasps. "In my father's house, yonder. I helped him enter the village. I have just left him standing in the dooryard of my home. And, oh, dear, dear, Madame Moreau, that is not all. He has taught me to be a rebel—and I love him—for that and for everything—for himself. O madame, you should see him. He is such a man as I never dreamed could live. You and everyone have thought me cold and heartless. It is not so. It needed but his eyes, his voice, his touch to set me on fire. Since we met I have had no peace, no rest—I have walked about as in a trance."

"And when and where did you meet?" asked Madame Moreau in a tone of doubtful sympathy.

"At the Sandwich ball. He was there. He came upon me in the nick of time to save my honour and my life, which were threatened by another. Listen, madame." She spoke excitedly. "He saved Jean Guion's life, too. You know him—he, too, loves the cause of liberty."

"Why, yes," replied the elder woman, passing her hand across her brow, as if recalling something, "Jacques Guion spoke to me of such a one when inquiring for my husband a few days ago; but Jacques gave him a bad character."

"Jacques Guion is a fool!" exclaimed Doris warmly.

"I know people say so," returned the woman, "and he does look it."

"He is! He is as capable of judging of this man as a child is of understanding the movements of the stars. He *is* a fool!"

"This spy saved your life, Doris, and in return you have risked everything for him, and he has permitted you to do so?"

"Yes, no—that is—I wanted to do something for our cause. I knew a way. I only threw him a rope. He came in and tried to tell me I did wrong, and offered to go out again in the same way, but I threw the rope away and ran to you."

Had it been day, a smile might have been detected on Madame Moreau's usually placid face. "He—came—in—and—offered—to—go—out," she repeated, slowly, as if to drive into the girl's mind a suggestion of the absurdity of it all.

"You think him ungenerous—a coward, Madame Moreau. I tell you he is not. He is as brave as a lion. He came because I begged him to come. I did not love him—then. I thought him splendid, and as he talked to me I saw the wrongs and sufferings of our people, and my heart burned to stand beside him and do something brave for them—for them, Madame Moreau, for America, for liberty, for another flag that shall stand for justice and equality. Do you remember that song we Britons have sung for nearly a hundred years? I have heard my father sing it often at his forge, keeping time with his hammer:

"Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame,
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown.
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves ;
Britons never will be slaves!"

"Has King George supposed that Britons, in leaving their homes for this new land, have given up one jot or one tittle of the resolution so nobly expressed in that last line? Does he think that, swearing not to be slaves at home, they have come to learn submission amid the perils of the wilderness? Rather, has not breathing the freedom of these shores given a more earnest and enduring note to that song? Is it a wonder that Britons rebel, and may not a true Englishwoman, whose heart is ever for the weak and the oppressed, be a rebel and do her part?"

Madame Moreau was not a strong woman measured by the weight of her brain. She could see a *quod est demonstrandum* if the premises were simple and some one laid them down plainly and pointed out the conclusion; but as for arriving herself at an end by logical ways, she could not do it. She left problems of political economy and statecraft to her husband, who was something of a philosopher as well as hunter, and, when she understood his conclusions, followed them as every good wife should. She knew scores of things that Antoine Moreau did not know—as, for instance, how to keep back wrinkles with courtesy, how to keep

a neat house, broil a fish, embroider impossible dragons and flowers on canvas, make lace of dreamy fineness, and do other wonderful things with the needle. When a young girl she had played on the harpsichord and spinet. So she was content if Antoine knew some things she did not. The *raison d'être* of the war between England and her colonies was little understood by her, and, indeed, little appreciated where understood, because in her little, narrow sphere of life, bounded by a little patch of grass in the front yard and a small garden in the rear, and the duties appertaining to the same, she had felt the hand of oppression but lightly; and indeed, had it found its way heavily into her household, she was too meek and forgiving to complain. Such a speech from Doris Cameron, the frivolous though admittedly attractive daughter of Neill Cameron, struck the good woman as something wonderful, but she could only reply out of the fulness of her surprise and the slimness of her vocabulary:

“Yes, indeed, child; and does this sp—— this man love you?”

How affairs of the heart do outweigh everything else in our interest! It seems strange that our love affairs, which concern only ourselves, should interest others most. A good chaperone for a lot of marriageable young women was spoiled when Annette Moreau was planted in the wilderness to go to seed for want of material on which to devote her undeveloped talent in that direction. Now that she had got hold of a thread of sentiment she was going to follow it to the very end.

She did not see the red flame that mantled the girl's cheeks and neck.

"No! Not that!" replied the girl. "Would God he did! He loves only the cause he fights for."

"Then he ought to be ashamed to teach you these things and get you into trouble."

"Why, Madame Moreau!" the girl exclaimed in surprise. "Has not Antoine Moreau taught you to hate the oppressor? Then why may not some good, brave man teach Doris Cameron?"

"True, child, and you have proved a very apt pupil. But what will you say when your father returns?"

"I—do—not—know," she said. The words fell slowly and with shuddering breath.

"And this—young man—what will become of him, protected by two lone women? I would that Antoine were here." There was a tone of uneasiness in Madame Moreau's voice.

"Then you do not wish me to stay? I can sleep out under the trees. But I thought you would help me and believe in me. I——"

"Yes, yes, child," quickly interrupted the other, "you thought right. You shall stay here. In the morning we shall see what is to be done. I had only thought if Antoine were here he could think and plan for us. Come now, you must go to bed and to sleep."

"I fear I shall not sleep. My heart still beats from my running."

"Are you sure it is from your running, my dear?" asked Annette, her eyes twinkling under their fat lids, *all unseen to Doris in the darkness.*

"I am not sure," she answered timidly; and it was far into the night, when trying for the thousandth time to close her eyes, she decided what the real cause was, but she did not waken the peaceful sleeper at her side to tell her. At last sorrow and fear took their leave. A calm, peaceful happiness took possession and she fell asleep. So near are the springs of sorrow and happiness in the heart.

CHAPTER XII

A COURIER arrived in Detroit early the next morning with word that the expedition that had gone to the relief of Vincennes was returning and had reached Ecorse, a scattering French settlement a few miles below, on the river, and would arrive at Detroit within a few hours. The glad news soon spread throughout the fort and village, and the inhabitants congregated at once in the streets, where they stood in groups expressing to one another their joy over the safe return of husbands, fathers, and brothers. Soon there was a general movement toward the west gate, out of which the road ran down the river in the direction of Ecorse, and as early as nine o'clock many whose friends were in the little band of returning heroes took a place of vantage near the gate or set out on foot to meet them on the way. Captain Lernoult stood at the head of his little company of regulars, drums beating and flag flapping in the breeze, ready, on the signal, to march out and receive with all the pomp and ceremony of which the village and fort were capable, the little band which, while not returning victorious, was yet unvanquished.

Madame Moreau, up and about her work almost

before the dawn, heard the news from a neighbour, who called it across the little patch of green sward that separated their cottages. She had stealthily crept out of bed and left Doris sleeping. The poor girl needed the rest, she had said. But her duty now was plain. She questioned an individual who was hurrying up the street to the fort, to make sure that the report was true, and then re-entered the house. To her surprise, Doris was sitting upright in bed, with blanched cheeks and startled gaze.

"What is it? Tell me, good Madame Moreau. You have news for me. I see it in your face. I heard some one talking to you. Have they found him?"

"No, child, not that. Your father is here."

"Here?" cried the girl, springing from the bed and wringing her hands in her perplexity.

"He is coming," answered Madame Moreau. "The soldiers are coming back to-day—by mid-day, they say. A messenger has just brought word."

"To-day! Oh, what shall I do? Think, madame. Think of that poor man yonder in my father's house." Then suddenly her eyes lighted up, and, drawing the French woman to her side, she exclaimed: "I know! Listen! The town will be in an uproar. Everyone will rush out to see the soldiers. No one will see. The drums will beat, the people will cheer, and all else will be forgotten." Her eyes were glittering and her cheeks flushing.

"But how will that help—him?" interposed the French woman, puzzled.

"Oh, you dear, good friend, wait and see! Oh, I am so happy that they are coming back, and I shall see my father. It *has* been lonely, Madame Moreau, without him. He was always good to me. I know you think him cross and overbearing—everybody does; but he is good—good to me. I understand him, you see. But I must not stand ~~here~~ laughing and crying by turns, with so much to be done. I will slip into my dress in a minute—I will be quick, oh, so quick about it, and we'll surprise our prisoner with a good breakfast, and then you will see. I have a plan."

At this the girl hastened with trembling fingers to make her simple toilet, chatting and laughing all the time in a quick, nervous way, while her hostess went quietly about starting the breakfast fire.

Robert Norvell at this moment stood with his ear pressed to the crack of the door of Neill Cameron's cottage, pale and anxious. There were strange noises without in the growing dawn. He heard hurrying feet and far-away shouts, as of men calling to one another. It boded no good, he thought. His worst fears were to be realised. Doris Cameron had gone, he said to himself, at early dawn—perhaps straight away from her meeting with him—to the headquarters of the commandant. His hiding-place was known. Doubtless, if he looked out, even now he could see the sentry standing guard. The news had gone throughout the village. A squad was even now on its way to arrest him. Should he fight, or give himself up without a struggle? He looked about in the growing light for a

weapon—there was none. He laughed a hopeless sort of laugh. "It's all over with Robert Norvell. There will be one less rebel. Well, I shall die at home, any way. I shall sleep with my fathers, as they say. That's some comfort."

At last, in sheer desperation, he determined to end the suspense and uncertainty. "I've enjoyed old Neill Cameron's hospitality long enough. If I am taken, it shall be in the free air and not without a fight." Then, making another search of the cabin for a weapon, he found, in Neill Cameron's bedroom, a bone-handled hunting-knife. He took it up, felt of its keen edge, and put it in his belt. Then for a moment he stood trying to decide what next to do. There was a knock at the outer door. He clutched the knife again and drew it forth. "Who's there?" he shouted. There was no answer. Then came a second knock, louder than the first.

"If you want Robert Norvell, come and take him. He's ready. But the man that crosses this threshold first will pay the penalty for his rashness."

"And if a woman crosses it who brings you a breakfast?" came a voice, half timorous, half playful, from without.

Norvell's rigid form relaxed. His hand thrust the knife into his belt, and, stepping quickly to the door, he opened it cautiously.

"May I come in?" asked Doris Cameron, with what to Norvell seemed a look presaging mischief in her black eyes.

"It is your privilege, mademoiselle; it is your home." He spoke with studied politeness, appearing not to notice the pewter platter heaped with a smoking breakfast which she carried.

"Oh, my dear sir, you are angry with me! And for what, pray? For giving you a good bed last night, and now bringing you a hot breakfast? Truly, a strange reason! Oh, I know. It was because I threw away that rope so that you couldn't run away from your duty. I have no doubt I shall suffer for that when my father returns, for ropes cost money in Detroit, monsieur—oh, very much money." She was spreading a table. Norvell was studying her. Her manner was strangely free, and in the flush of excitement she seemed a splendid creature. "Too bad she is such a trickster," he said to himself.

"Now breakfast is ready," she continued, "and I have come to eat it with you. Here is my father's chair for you." She looked him full in the face. "He is coming home to-day."

"More good luck!" Norvell muttered, half aloud. He never saw such sublime insolence. She was playing with him as a cat with a mouse.

"Indeed it is good luck, as you shall see presently," she replied. "I shall sit here directly across from you. It is quite homelike, don't you think so? Now, why don't you come?" She folded her arms and sat looking at him, her lips pouting prettily and her eyes dancing with fun. Norvell couldn't help wondering how *lips* fashioned and coloured as were these could *practise* such arrant deception.

"You believe in flattering your victims, made-moiselle, before you hand them over for slaughter. This is to be a sort of feast of Death. It ought to be jolly."

Her look and tone suddenly changed. She was now calm, severe, haughty. She leaned forward, her eyes fixed intently on his.

"Sir, what are you saying? Are you angry with me that I have risked my life for you? Is it a light thing I have given you, that you should spurn it? Am I but a crazy girl to have incurred a father's wrath, perhaps disinheritance, perhaps exile, possibly death itself, for you? Are you sneering at me, now? For shame! You are not the brave, generous, noble man I thought you." She arose from the table and stood beside him straight as a javelin, her face ashy pale, and sharp flashes darting from her eyes. "But I shall go on. I have gone too far to retreat if I would. There is your breakfast, sir. You may eat it alone. I shall wait outside. A sentry may not prove amiss, so I shall stand guard. When you have finished, I will come and tell you of a plan that will rid you of my presence and my interference, and save you from detection." With this she hastily closed the door behind her, and the man was left alone.

For some time Norvell stood irresolute; then he threw himself into a chair.

"Norvell, you're a fool!" he exclaimed. "That girl is true. That voice, those eyes, this breakfast attest it. Not a mouthful will I eat till I solve this riddle." He stepped to the door, but did not open it.

"Mademoiselle!"

No answer.

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle!"

No answer.

"Mademoiselle Doris!" This somewhat louder.

"Have you eaten so soon, sir?" she whispered from the other side.

"I have not tasted the meal. But will you not come back?"

"Not till you have eaten."

"Those are your best terms?"

"My very best," she answered with naïveté.

"Then I shall eat."

There was something in the changed tone of his voice that caused her heart to beat faster. She heard him walk across the floor and seat himself at the table. Then she waited what seemed to her a long time. She began to think him very hungry, and was on the point of giving a playful warning against his overeating in the face of danger when some one approached her from behind. She turned, and Parks, one of Skelton's accomplices the night of the proposed murder of Jean Guion, greeted her with an awkward bow.

"Mornin', miss. Heard the news?"

"That the Vincennes party is returning? Yes," she answered, apparently indifferent.

"I suppose you're glad Neill's comin' back?"

"Yes. I shall be very glad to see my father."

"I've got more news for you," he went on. "That fellow you was with at Sandwich the other night—the

tall fellow you was with when Stebbins and me met you on the walk" (Parks was looking hard into the girl's face), "he's a rebel spy; and let me tell you this, Neill Cameron's daughter, you're purty and smart, but you have got to answer for somethin' yerself for that night. Ask Skelton. He's put two and two together. I'm a fish if I don't half b'lieve you helped that spy to spoil our game that night. No one knew it but you." The man leered and shook his head ominously.

"Who told you Robert Norvell was a spy?" she asked.

"Ah! You know his name. Jacques Guion told Captain Lernoult, and now the whole garrison knows it. If you're asked some hard questions don't blame Sam Parks. Jacques says this Norvell's more 'n likely in the village now, but seein' the close watch that's bein' kep' I don't see how he could get in. Maybe you do." His tone was insinuating, but the girl was brave.

Norvell, hearing voices, stepped to the door and listened. His secret, then, was out!

"Jacques Guion could be in better business," remarked the girl, "than playing informer; for if the man was a spy, and what you say is true, he saved Jacques's miserable life and that of his father, too. But I don't believe the story. So there!"

"Ladies is slow to b'lieve bad of good-lookin' men, and this Norvell was somethin' to look at, accordin' to Jacques. I don't blame you any for takin' up with him, mind you, providin' you didn't know what he was.

He's turned that Constant girl's head, and I guess that 's why Jacques is tellin' on him. Fools love as well as wise men, and even a fool don't like bein' beaten when it comes to a girl."

"Felice Constant, of Grosse Ile?" asked Doris, almost under her breath, displaying the first apparent sign of real interest.

"The same; but what makes you look so? One would think you had lost somethin'."

"Nothing, Mr. Parks. I thought I didn't understand you. I must go in now and prepare for my father's home-coming."

"Good-day, miss. I hope it ain't true what Skelton thinks."

Doris scarcely heard Parks's closing remark; for she had quickly pushed open the door, and, ere the man had started to go, was inside.

"You heard what that man said?" she asked abruptly.

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"The whole village will soon know about you," she said earnestly.

"And they will suspect you," he returned. "Now, there is every reason why I should leave this place. Do not, I pray you, let me longer stand thus convicted before my conscience of having wronged you. I will give up my mission. I will do anything to save you. I will go; I *must* go." He started to leave the house. Doris laid her hand on his arm.

"Then I will go with you," she said quietly and

firmly, looking up into his eyes as she spoke, a slight blush stealing over her face. Norvell read the girl's mind. There was in her look the yearning of a heart that would not be put off.

"That is impossible, quite," he replied, embarrassed by the revelation.

At this moment the beating of drums was heard in the direction of the west gate, accompanied by the shouts of the populace.

The girl's figure straightened, her eyes flashed, and her voice came clear and resolute.

"They are coming. You must not remain here. My father will kill you. Listen!" She led him to the door and threw it open. "Go up yon path to the street at the brow of the hill. Follow that street to the west; it leads to the gate. The whole village will be there, all intent on watching and cheering the returning soldiers. Push your way among them. Pass the gate and join the newcomers as they enter, and march in with them. No one will know you. When the crowd disperses, find your way to the cottage behind the beech-trees yonder—it is Antoine Moreau's. His wife Annette will receive you and give you lodging. Now go, quick!"

"And you would really save me?" he cried, overcome with a full realisation of the girl's anxiety for him.

"Yes, yes! Your life is dearer to me than my own."

"And I will see you—again?" he asked tenderly.

“At Madame Moreau’s, soon.” There were untold depths of timid devotion in her tone.

He took both of her hands in his, bent low over them, and with high-bred courtesy kissed the tips of her white fingers, then left her. He saw not the mist that gathered before her eyes, nor heard the sob that broke from her heart a moment later as she threw herself trembling upon her bed.

The shouts of the people grew apace; the drums beat a louder and louder tattoo. The heroes were coming nearer and nearer; they must be at the gate now. Her father would be looking for her among the people. Springing to her feet, she dashed the tears from her eyes, hastily put to rights Neill Cameron’s room, and then, like a frightened deer, sped to join the motley crowd of men, women, children, English, French, and Indians, merchants, trappers, and soldiers that surged and jostled in the narrow street at the entrance to the village.

Swiftly Norvell made his way as directed to the west gate which the head of the procession was just entering. Through that tumultuous little gathering George Washington, the arch-rebel himself, would have passed unchallenged, for all eyes were looking for returning friends and neighbours. First came the band playing the martial airs of Britain, surrounded by a motley rabble of young and old, dancing, shouting, and waving their caps and handkerchiefs; then Captain Lernoult, very stocky, stiff, and grand, followed by his staff resplendent in gold lace, among whom marched Lieu-

tenant Skelton, remarkable for his smart attire and proud step, the cause of more than one heart-flutter as he well knew, but looking neither to right nor left; following came the eighty or more red-coated regulars, guns on shoulders, marching along four abreast; and then a mixed company of men—the heroes of the hour, composed of regulars, volunteers, woodsmen, trappers, traders, and adventurers, many of those among the latter classes having joined the little band at points along the route.

Norvell saw here his opportunity. He had pushed through the unprotected gate, and now, unobserved, as he thought, he dropped into the marching line and his identity was swallowed up effectually. Here no semblance of order was maintained; women rushed forward and embraced their husbands; fathers took their little ones in their arms, and, lifting their big chapeaus from their own heads, set them on the heads of the boys and themselves marched bareheaded and laughing; neighbours rushed into the ranks to shake hands with neighbours, and Norvell found he had his hands full keeping any place at all in the slowly moving procession that threaded its way along the narrow street of the village and then to the fort on the high ground within whose confines the ceremony of welcome was to end with an address by the commandant and a response by Lieutenant Borden, of the returning party.

As he pushed his way along, Norvell kept keen watch of the people that lined the narrow streets for the

face of Doris Cameron, but she was nowhere to be seen. She was there, however, peering cautiously from among a group of her friends, her face beaming with joy at the success of her plan.

Nor did Norvell know that other eyes were on him—those of Jacques Guion,—treacherous, sinister eyes.

While hunting on Turkey Island that morning, Jacques had heard the beat of drums on the shore above Ecorse. He would discover its meaning. Entering his canoe, he paddled to shore and waited till the band of redcoats and stragglers reached him, when he dropped into line and with them entered Detroit. He was not ten feet away from Robert Norvell when the latter joined the party, and he noted the air of satisfaction the man wore when he found himself lost in the tumult.

From that moment Jacques kept his eyes on Norvell, and later, when the crowd separated on the parade-ground, he followed him till he saw him enter the cottage of Antoine Moreau. Then, hurrying to officers' quarters as fast as his shambling gait would permit, he asked to see Captain Lernoult. The captain and his staff were in the council-house toasting the safe return of Borden and his men.

"Zounds! That Indian again?" cried the captain. "Let him wait." And wait he did, till several hours later the sounds of laughter and coarse jest died away; then he tried again.

"Tell the idiot to wait. It 's more of his crazy tales. Come, friends, another bumper, and here 's to Colonel

Hamilton, and may he live to tan his captor's hide for a winter coat."

The orderly repeated the captain's message to Jacques with an oath by way of emphasis, and the fellow slunk away, sullen and revengeful. His first impulse was to let the captain look out for himself, and then the old rankling came back into his breast—his savage love for the French girl, the coming between them of this Robert Norvell with his fine face and fine words, the punishment he got on the fishing-trip; and then he decided to try again—but later.

There was feasting and merry-making in Detroit all that day and until late in the night. Robert Norvell found a kindly, motherly welcome in the quiet home of Annette Moreau, and, not knowing the influences at work against him, felt safe from molestation. He questioned his hostess at once as to her knowledge of his parents and his sister, but inquiry in that direction proved vain. Then he went out on the streets and mingled with the people, eagerly scanning women's faces for longed-for signs of her whom he sought, and discreetly questioning men whom he chanced to meet. Everybody that day was off guard, and Norvell wandered where he would, making mental note of everything, examining defenses, sketching rude maps, counting guns, estimating the forces and stores, and even plying with impertinent questions guards and petty officers, all of whom were more or less mellow from the round of feasting and drinking that characterised the day. Several times he passed the house of Neill

Cameron, hoping to get a glimpse of his guardian angel, and hungering for a smile of recognition and sympathy. But Doris was not to be seen. She was making merry with the rest, her eyes the brightest, her cheek the rosiest, her song the liveliest, for her heart was in a tumult of nervous joy.

Neill Cameron had come home, embraced his daughter in his brusque, hearty manner, sworn in both French and English that they could have licked the rebels out of their boots had they had the chance, and then gone out to celebrate with his friends and neighbours, leaving Doris to fly to Annette Moreau, tell her what had happened, bid her prepare for a guest, and then seek her friends and intimates to give further vent to her pent-up emotions, though keeping deep down in her heart the precious but awful secret back of it all.

Just after dark, Norvell, on turning a street corner, suddenly came face to face with Jacques Guion, whose dogged expression of face presaged mischief.

"The devil!" exclaimed Norvell, startled at the sudden encounter. "How came you here?"

"I come to find you," the fellow answered with a wicked leer.

"Now you have found me, what do you want?"

"I kill you." Norvell's eye caught the flash of a knife in the man's hand.

"You are honest, at least, this time."

"You take my Felice."

"You mean Mademoiselle Constant, of Grosse Ile?"

"Yes. You visit her one night. You——"

"What do you mean, you cur?" Furious, angry gleams darted from Norvell's eyes.

"She say you fool her."

"You lie. Unsay those words. Quick, man, or it will go hard with you." He was in a paroxysm of rage.

Jacques threw himself into an attitude of defense, crouching like a tiger about to spring, his feet braced, his knife lifted, and his eyes darting defiance.

"Throw away that knife, you coward, and fight like a man," said Norvell sternly, at the same time stealthily creeping up to his antagonist. The half-breed settled himself for a lunge. As quick as thought Norvell's fist shot out, striking the man full in the face. The half-breed staggered back and gathered himself again, this time blind with rage; but, before he could spring, Norvell grabbed him about the body with his right arm, lifting him clear of the ground, and with his left hand caught the raised arm that held the knife and bent it back till a cry of pain burst from his victim and the knife fell to the ground. The two men now fought like demons. Once they fell together. In the fall Jacques got the knife, and in a savage thrust cut his antagonist's sleeve and grazed the skin. By a quick move Norvell wrested the knife from his grip and threw it as far as his strength permitted.

"I have a mind," he whispered, half aloud, in the half-breed's ear, "to end your miserable existence. But for your old father, whose name you disgrace, I'd put you where you could do no more harm."

“Pardon!” cried the man.

“Not till you have unsaid those words.”

“I not say them. I lied,” he whined piteously.

Norvell loosened his hold and stepped back.

“Then go; and don’t show yourself in Detroit for a week. In that time I’ll be gone. If you do—well, I’ll forget myself. Now go.”

Jacques arose with difficulty, and moved off, limping, toward the officers’ quarters. Having gone a few steps he perceived that Norvell was following him. The latter pointed to the gate, and Jacques changed his course. He stopped twice and looked back, but each time he saw the finger of Norvell pointing the way. There was but one thing to do; he went out of the gate and down the river road. Norvell waited until sure he would not return, then made his way through the gathering darkness to the home of Madame Moreau.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BALL had been planned by the younger officers of the fort for the following Wednesday. It was to serve two purposes: one to do honour to the men who had returned from the Vincennes expedition; the other to compliment the ladies and gentlemen of Sandwich as a return for the affair given there the week before. It was to be a grand *fête*, eclipsing anything before seen in Detroit. The maids and matrons of the village were in a flutter of excitement from morning till night, and the men were not immune to the general air of anxious expectancy; scarcely did two meet that there was not some discussion over arrangements, and some bantering and chaffing over the good or ill fortune of each in securing a desirable *parti*.

The several hairdressers of the village were again in clover, for gentlemen as well as ladies must employ some one of these masters of the art of curling, rolling, and crimping, to be *de rigueur*. The musicians attached to the garrison practised early and late on some new music that had just come in from Montreal, and the dancing master was the busiest man in town.

Most interested of all were the officers of the fort,

the greater number of whom were young men with wives or sweethearts in the East. They were as a rule an irresponsible lot of fellows, with no further purpose in life than doing their round of military duties, swearing at their subordinates, and anathematising their luck in being stationed in the wilderness away from the gayeties of Quebec and Montreal, and compelled, under a mere captain, to help in the chopping of trees, the digging of ditches, and the piling up of embankments in a swamp.

Despite the work of enlarging the fortifications that was now going on, they were dying of *ennui* and itching for amusement and adventure. Detroit was too far from the base of the rebellion to experience actual warfare; the Indians had given no trouble since, a dozen years or more before, Pontiac, the grand old man among his people, had been put down, and the government had taken to furnishing Indian supplies with a liberal hand; and now the expedition to Vincennes and the chance for fighting there had failed. So the officers and men turned to cards, dancing, and flirtation with the enthusiasm of despair.

A few nights before the ball was to take place a company of officers sat about a rude table in Captain Lernoult's quarters, engaged at whist. There was the captain himself, muscular, square-set, with long moustache well waxed, bristly hair that no hairdresser however skilful could make anything out of, a very red face, and a harsh, discordant voice; Lieutenant Bondy, a little man, with sparse gray hair, bald on the top of

his head, with very dark eyes looking out from under strong brows; Doctor Porter, the post physician, a spare, dark man wearing his hat at all times cocked over one ear; and Lieutenant Skelton, with a thin and meagre apology of a body, a face somewhat too delicate for a man, a downy moustache coaxed to two very insignificant ends, and roving, restless eyes. His attire was immaculate, his uniform fitting to perfection, his hands and nails were clean, and one did not need to come near to him to detect a strong odour of musk. The man's whole appearance was insinuating—such as, associated with fine words, is seldom linked with virtue.

The men had played till far into the night, and had finally cast aside their cards, settled their accounts, and fallen to discussing the coming ball.

“By the way, Skelton,” suggested Bondy, “you have never told us what happened to you the night of the ball at Sandwich. You were absent the whole evening, and when you did appear you looked like cocked dice.” A general smile went around, in which Skelton joined, not a bit abashed, though his eyes shifted uneasily.

“Where there's nothing to tell, tell nothing,” he replied.

“Come, come, Skelton, who ever saw you at a dance run at the first gun and never appear again? You may as well confess. What game were you chasing? Come, give us the story.”

“Lieutenant, I command you to speak,” said the

captain with a show of authority, at which there was a general laugh, for Skelton showed an uneasiness that betrayed him and gave promise of rich developments if pushed.

"Well, I am not given to boasting, and I'd rather not speak of the matter," said he, with an air of modesty.

"We'll excuse the blushes. Go on," encouraged the doctor.

"Here, take a bracer," exclaimed Bondy, as he poured out a stout glass of brandy and gave it to him, and then one for each of the others. "We 'll all join you. Here's a song:

"The greatest of all kings that reign,
When I have wine my heart to cheer,
With war would threaten me in vain,
He would not rouse the slightest fear.
At table nought my soul can move ;
And if above me, while I drink,
The thunders roar of mighty Jove,
He is afraid of me, I think."

"Now, Skelton," resumed Bondy, after they had all drunk, "was she English, French, or Indian, dark or fair, young or old, hard or soft?"

"Gentlemen, you are on the wrong tack. You saw me leave the ballroom with Doris Cameron. We strolled down to the beach. A drunken Indian accosted us and used language no lady should hear. I struck him. There was a mix-up and I punished him. That's all there is to it."

"But the lady came back alone and made no explanations," suggested the doctor, who expected a rare narrative and was not to be put off by so commonplace and wholly unlikely a story.

"And it took you all the evening to trounce a drunken Indian?" added Captain Lernoult, his red face broadening into a great grin.

"Well, I got more than I bargained for and had to lay up for repairs," replied Skelton with an air of sincerity. "I've carried a reminder here ever since," and he threw back a bunch of hair that was combed down over his forehead, displaying an ugly-looking break in the skin with an angry circle of purple about it. "As to the girl, she ran away from me. Let me tell you, Neill Cameron's daughter will bear watching. She 's a devil in the livery of an angel."

"Zounds, man!" cried the doctor, half smiling at what he thought was intended by Skelton as wit; "Neill Cameron ought to know this."

"If he did," suggested Bondy significantly, "and he knew who said it, he'd put a mate to that scar on the other side of Skelton's forehead, if he didn't send him to Erebus at once."

"What's said is said," replied Skelton stubbornly and with warmth; "the girl's a traitor."

"A traitor!" cried the men in unison.

"I choose my words carefully," replied Skelton calmly.

"Your proof, lieutenant. No man ought to make such a charge against a woman, and she the daughter

of old Neill Cameron, till he 's sure of his ground," said Captain Lernoult with dignity.

"It looks very much to me as if she jilted you that night, or perhaps you were playing your tricks on her, and she or some one of her friends gave you an answer between the eyes," suggested Porter coolly. He had not said much, but was watching Skelton closely. Skelton winced perceptibly, then answered:

"Every man looks out of his own eyes, and he generally sees what he wants to see. Your experience has been wider than mine."

"Hullo! Getting personal, isn't it?" laughed Bondy. "At any rate, Doris Cameron is the prettiest, wittiest girl in Detroit, traitor or not. Skelton's in fun, and he's making sport of us. Come, another glass and change the subject."

"Yes, another glass!" cried the captain, rising. "I will hear more of your story to-morrow, Skelton. In the mean time here's to Neill Cameron's daughter!"

"I 'll not drink," said Skelton, putting down his glass untouched.

"You shall!" cried Lernoult, red in the face.

"But on one condition," added Skelton coolly.

"Name it," snapped the captain.

"That you drink afterward to the daughter of Pierre Constant, of Grosse Ile."

"That witch!"

"That rebel!"

"That daughter of evil!" exclaimed the men in surprise.

"You bid me toast an enemy. I accept and bid you toast another—the fairest rebel of them all."

"Skelton, you are stark mad!" cried the captain.

"Drink with me, captain and gentlemen, and I'll bring you evidence of all I say and more, within a week. There is an American spy—Robert Norvell—in this vicinity. I am endeavouring to find him. I need only watch a woman, and that woman Neill Cameron's daughter. Where there's a woman in the case it's short shrift. Two men are watching her, and the fruit is nearly ripe."

"Egad!" exclaimed the captain, sitting down hard in his chair again, and shaking the table with his fist. "I'll drink no more to-night. We'll be toasting George Washington himself if this goes on. An hour ago, and I would have handed my command over to Doris Cameron with perfect confidence. It's hard to tell in Detroit these days whom to trust. Hamilton's men on parole have returned sworn not to fight the Americans, and many of them are sowing seeds of actual sedition right here among us; and here is the daughter of our most loyal citizen, Neill Cameron, herself the leading spirit among the young women of the place, turning traitor. Where will it all end?"

The other men sat silent. Skelton's apparent sincerity and offer of proof stunned them.

"Lieutenant," he went on, "we owe you much for your loyal service. I leave this to you. Report to me daily."

"I accept the commission, but not without pain,"

replied Skelton with feigned feeling; "for the discovery of this girl's double dealing will put you in an embarrassing position."

"Egad, no!" replied the captain, stamping his foot and shaking his head like an enraged lion. "A traitor is a traitor, and be it man or woman, friend or foe, it's death. If I can buy the bleeding scalp of a settler who dies fighting for his home, do you think I will fail when it comes to ridding my own camp of turn-coats and informers? No, egad, I'd hang one of those fellows with my own hands—man or woman—and count it good luck to get the chance. Go on, get your evidence, and I'll do the rest. I mistake my man if Neill Cameron does not support me should the blow fall on his own household."

"Then I have a favour to ask," said Skelton. "It will help me in my work. You will grant it for the sake of the cause, though it may not set well on your stomach."

"Go on!"

"I wish your permission to bring to the ball a young woman whose beauty will outshine them all."

"Doris Cameron?" asked the captain in surprise.

"One more beautiful than she."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the entire group.

"And why, pray, ask my permission?" asked the captain. "You have it already. But you must have made a discovery, truly, to have found a prettier than the Cameron girl."

"Yes, a discovery," replied Skelton. "I have seen

her only once, but that vision was enough. I have dreamed of nothing else since."

"A paragon!" exclaimed Bondy.

"A *rara avis*," echoed the doctor.

"Where did you find this quintessence of loveliness?" asked the captain, his good humour returning.

"First, you raise no objection?"

"And why should I? The keys of Detroit belong to any woman worthy of such extravagant praise, and you're a connoisseur, Skelton, in matters of this sort."

"Hold on, captain," said Bondy, smiling. "You are too susceptible. You just confessed that an hour ago you might have surrendered to an enemy, without knowing it, all on account of her eyes."

"I have your word?" pressed Skelton.

"Yes, man, a dozen of them and by two witnesses. But who is the girl?"

"Old man Constant's daughter."

"Felice Constant!" exclaimed the three in a breath.

"It is out of the question," cried the captain, rising, as if to cut the matter short.

"Your word, captain, by two witnesses," replied Skelton quickly. "Was it not given, gentlemen?"

"You gave your word, captain," Porter replied.

"But she is an outlaw!" exclaimed the captain. "She and her father have been forbidden the fort. He's a black rebel, and she's not much better."

"Nevertheless I claim your word, captain."

"Well, damme, you have it. Hamilton banished them anyhow. It was none of my work. But she'll

not come," suggested the captain, finding comfort in the thought.

"Leave that to me," quietly returned the lieutenant.

"But what will the garrison say? All the town knows the terms of old Constant's imprisonment at Grosse Ile."

"What need you care?" suggested Bondy. "Are you not commandant here? You did not send them away. You are not bound by Hamilton's acts."

"But it's dangerous," suggested the captain gravely; "if all I hear of that child of nature is true, she'll turn the heads of half my officers, and they'll tell her all they know. Pretty faces will do more than cannon-balls. I'm afraid of them myself."

"Not in one evening, captain," said Skelton, smiling; for, having gained his point, he was in a good humour. "I'll see that she has no chance to do any mischief. I'll keep her busy myself, gentlemen."

"But you'll present her to the commanding officer," suggested the doctor, noting the captain's interest, which was growing suspiciously warm.

"If he promises to keep hands off," replied Skelton.

"I'll promise nothing, gentlemen," said Lernout.

"I tell you I don't like this business." He again brought his big fist down hard on the table, almost upsetting the flagon and cups, that danced about as though possessed. "You can't do it," he continued doggedly. "She'll not come. She hates us English as the devil hates holy water."

"I admit, gentlemen, I may have difficulty in per-

suading the girl to come, but she 's a woman" ("if not a witch," put in Porter), "and I flatter myself I shall not be *persona non grata*. It's a ball, you know—and what French woman can withstand the dance?"

"A sympathetic combination, truly," exclaimed Porter. "What woman, French or English, or anything, for that matter, could withstand Skelton and a dance—in fact, why not say Skelton alone?"

They all laughed.

"I don't mind telling you," continued Skelton, unmindful of the jest, "that ever since that Sandwich affair I have planned to take down this Doris Cameron from the high pedestal she stands on. I shall humiliate her by bringing to the ball a beauty in whose presence she will have to fold up her wings. She has treated me as if I were a dog, and I'll show her a trick that will spoil her sleep for many a night."

"Oho! Then she did jilt you! We shall get at the bottom of that Sandwich affair yet," exclaimed Bondy with a grin.

"You may call it a jilt if you will, but after my punching that Indian she left me and has had nothing to do with me since."

"Ungrateful hussy!" said the captain in a tone of mock seriousness.

"Perhaps the next time," added Porter, "you'll let her fight her own battles."

"My knowledge of the sex leads me to think they are quite able to do it," said the captain. "But let's have another drink and to bed. Here's a sentiment:

“Without ceasing, drink and laugh ;
Lips to kiss and cups to quaff
Cheer our moments more than thinking,
Be our heads with ivy crown'd ;
At our festivals be found
None but friends of love and drinking.”

The glasses clinked and the men started to go. The captain turned to Skelton as they strode to the door :

“Skelton, I shall hold you responsible for what mischief that Grosse Ile girl does here, if she comes. Keep her near you, so that our men will have no chance to spring a leak. You will, of course, let me meet her, eh, Skelton?” The captain’s thumb here gave the lieutenant a sly poke.

“You! Well, for the safety of the garrison, I hardly think so,” Skelton laughed quietly—he seldom laughed otherwise.

“See here, Skelton, I am your commanding officer,” said the captain in a whisper.

“At your service, captain,” replied Skelton, saluting with mock deference. “I’ll give you—say one dance—if—if she ’ll let me leave her for that long.”

“The devil!”

“Your gratitude overwhelms me, captain. I would give you more, but you have made me her special guardian, and more than one dance wouldn’t do—no, no, not with Felice Constant. *Au revoir.*”

“Good night,” returned the captain, shortly; then, turning, he followed his subordinate a step or two and

continued *sotto voce*, "By the way, Skelton—this Doris Cameron. Were you in earnest?"

"Quite. I shall soon have the proof."

"Ye gods! I do not know when I have had such a shock. Watch her, and report to me. Women are dangerous at all times—particularly pretty ones. Good night!"

The captain turned into his house and closed the door. Lieutenant Skelton strode up the street, picking his way carefully over the dark and uncertain footing. "It's a game worth the chancing, by Jove," he repeated to himself. "But what if I am mistaken! Yet the facts are convincing. There can be no mistake. That happening on the beach at Sandwich"—he passed his hand over the wound on his head that, scarcely healed, was still throbbing; "the trick played on Parks and Stebbins; the conversation between these fellows, Doris Cameron and the stranger but a few feet from the place where I was knocked down; this story of Jacques Guion that a certain Robert Norvell, spy, was at the ball that night; the girl's manner when Parks talked with her the morning the men came back from the expedition. It's as plain as day. Doris Cameron is aiding a spy. It's big game, and I'll bag it, too. Parks and Stebbins can be relied on. They will never forget the trick that fellow played them. They have sworn to find the fellow and trip his fair accomplice. She must be in love with him. What a ninny to surrender everything for a scallawag, dare-devil romancer she never saw before, who wins

her by a show of muscle. Well, she's a fool woman, and that's explanation enough. Can't say that I'm sorry for it all. It's an ill wind, and this one happens to blow my way a little good fortune, for I'll hold in my arms the only creature worthy of them—Felice Constant. Skelton, you're a lucky dog! She's as good as yours this minute. She can't withstand you once you get her away from the old man. Can't do it, eh! Trust to me, to Philander Doremus Skelton, Lieutenant in the King's Army, born and bred in London, pet of society, and too damned good for these mosquito-swamps and these squaw-bred Americans." Then he drew up a chair to his writing desk, selected his best quill, and wrote :

"MY DEAR MADEMOISELLE :

Pardon the presumption of one almost a stranger to you, in daring to write you ; but since meeting you a fortnight ago, when, on my fishing-trip, I was driven to seek shelter in your hospitable home, I have thought deeply on the wrongs you and your good father have suffered. I have learned about them from the authorities here. I have undertaken to help you, and have interceded with Captain Lernoult in your behalf. He is a kind and liberal officer. Governor Hamilton is now a prisoner with the American forces. Captain Lernoult, probably, will soon be superseded by Major De Peyster, now in command at Mackinaw. Now is your time—my time to act for you. Captain Lernoult is interested. He needs only to see you, and hear your story from your own lips, to grant any favour you may ask. Your father is feeble. He needs much that you

cannot give him, good and kind as you are. He needs the care of a physician and the consolations of religion. He needs friends and neighbours to cheer his declining years. I speak not of the day that must come when you will be left alone. It grieves me to think of your isolation, and what of trial the future has in store for you. You owe it to him and to yourself to make his last days as comfortable and happy as possible. You need not give up a single iota of your well-known loyalty to the cause of American Independence. Indeed, we soldiers sometimes wonder if you are not more than half right. There is but one thing for you to do. A grand ball will be given in Detroit next Wednesday evening. I ask you to attend it as my guest. I will come for you if I may; but if not, I will send an escort. I will present you to Captain Lernoult at the ball. He will listen with sympathetic ears to your story. He has heard it but partially. It needs but your presence to accomplish all. Here is a passport that will admit you to the village. You will not need it, however, as I shall instruct the sentries at the gate. Remember, delay means the coming of a new commanding officer, whose reputation does not promise any favour to those who sympathise with the American cause. Assuring you of my profoundest regard, and begging your forgiveness, I remain,

Your obedient servant,
 PHILANDER DOREMUS SKELTON,
Lieutenant, etc."

TO MADEMOISELLE CONSTANT,

Grosse Ile.

Having carefully folded the paper, together with a writing directing that the bearer be permitted, with

her escort, to pass the gates, he addressed and sealed it; then he arose, stood for a moment twisting his moustache, smiled self-approval into a small mirror that hung against the wall of his room, and took his perfumed self to bed.

CHAPTER XIV

THE one door of Pierre Constant's cabin at Grosse Ile was wide open, and the morning sun spread a pathway of splendour across the wide expanse of water straight to where the old man sat in his armchair, drawn close up to the threshold. Pierre loved to sit thus in the early morning and see the fog banks roll up and away, and watch the waterfowl at their morning sport, and the birds and squirrels congregate about his door for their never-failing feast of crumbs. He loved the river, and hour after hour he spent in gazing upon its shimmering surface and following with misty eyes the objects that floated on its broad, smooth current. This morning it seemed to him more beautiful and peaceful than ever, and with its current his thoughts ran on and on, back to the days of his young manhood.

Much of the old man's time was spent in thinking and talking of his younger days. Often he praised the foresight and sagacity of De la Mothe Cadillac in choosing for his settlement this beautiful spot on the banks of the Detroit; and this morning, for the hundredth time, he was relating to Felice in quavering tones the story of the day when up this same river, and past this very door, he, a young

man, brought his French bride from Montreal; how after years of toil and danger they established a home; how a little girl had come into that home bringing sunshine and joy, to be their *Felicité*—their Felice; how the fever had come, and then the mound in the little French cemetery near St. Anne's; then the troubles with the English, the loss of home, and the long exile of his old age—lonely but for the babe now grown to womanhood.

"But it is a fair place for a prison," Felice said, tripping to the dreamer's side and wiping the tears from his eyes, while struggling bravely to conceal her own. "We want for nothing. We are safe. No one troubles us. We have our good servant, Marmjuda. Jean Guion is a good neighbour. You and he have good times together. The river and the trees make melody for us. See, the birds and the squirrels love us, and then, we have each other." This she said sitting on the arm of his chair with both arms about his neck, her hair falling in a shower over his shoulders, and her eyes following his out over the quiet water.

"Yes, *Dieu merci!* It is enough for an old man like me. But you—you, my daughter." The old man's head dropped upon his breast.

"Oh, for me, father, think not of me. I am happy and free. I know nothing but this life. I should be very unhappy in—say Detroit or Montreal. I should run back to you as fast as my feet could carry me, and ask for my flowers and my birds and my, Marmjuda and my dear, dear father!"

"But it is of the days to come I am thinking," he replied mournfully. "When Pierre Constant shall lie in the little cemetery alongside—no, no, that will never be! The English will think no more of Pierre Constant dead than of Pierre Constant living. He will sleep here, under yon trees whose roots draw their life from the great river."

"Do not talk so, father. You have many, many years of life before you. You are all I have. I could not do without you."

"Ah, that is it. When I am gone, what will you do, my daughter? No protecting arm; no mother's heart; no sister's tear. An exile—alone."

"There is a good God, *mon père!*" But Felice's answer came from a bewildered soul. Ah, how often had she asked herself that same question with fear and trembling, and her only answer was this: "God, who cares for the innocent children of His creation that throng about my feet, will care for me." It was a sincere faith, but over against it there arose at times the awful dread of the day when she should turn to put it to the test—should face life alone.

The old man's rejoinder was an unspoken prayer. The two sat thus for some time, their cheeks pressed close.

Suddenly Pierre started a little and raised his hand. "Is not that a voice? The sound of paddles?"

Felice listened, then stepped to the doorway, shaded her eyes from the morning sun, and peered along the line of the marshes toward the north. She had been

doing this for days, she knew not why, as if expecting a message from some one, and now her breast quivered with emotion.

"It is coming. I hear the water as it drips from the paddles," said the old man, listening intently with ears trained for three-quarters of a century to more than a wild beast's watchfulness.

Felice ran down the path to the river bank; in a moment she was back breathless with excitement, her colour coming and going.

"Soldiers, father! They are coming just around the point. They are bringing you good news, I know. It is an answer to my prayers. Good! Good! Father! Why do you not smile? See how happy I am! They have come to tell you that the new commandant has given us back the old home on the Savoyard. At last they will do us justice. Come, father, let me smooth your hair and—there—that is better. 'How fine you look this morning, Monsieur Constant. You are not older grown by a day than when last we saw you on the streets of Detroit.' Thus they will address you, and they will be right. Now let me fix up a little; for it is not every day that Felice Constant entertains the army. I hope they come on a mission of peace." Then a dull pain shot through her heart at the thought which lay there like a snake ready to strike, that perhaps he—the young rebel she had piloted across the river—had been caught and that she was betrayed.

"No, my daughter," said the old Frenchman dejectedly, "no such good news for Pierre Constant. The

English have no favours for him. It is bad news. Close the door. I shall not like to see them."

Felice stepped quickly to the door, her courage fast oozing out at her delicate finger-tips, and her heart almost in her mouth, pressed there by a swelling tide of fear. Then she ran back and took her father's hand in her own trembling palm and stood waiting. She felt that they were facing a new trial—perhaps more bitter than any—perhaps they would take him away from her—or——there was a knock at the door.

"Shall I bid them enter, father?" she asked, a tremour in every syllable.

"We can do nothing else," answered Pierre resignedly.

The girl stepped forward, drew the bolt and opened the door. Two stalwart men in the uniform of the King's army strode in, giving a brief, half-courteous salutation, and receiving a simple curtsey from Felice and her father.

"This is Pierre Constant?" asked one of the soldiers, a bold, muscular, square-set fellow, pointing to the old man, who remained seated, his eyes turned on the floor.

"This is Monsieur Pierre Constant," answered the girl, resting a hand on her father's shoulder. "What is your errand, pray?"

"And this is Mademoiselle Constant?" he asked, trying to be polite, and succeeding after an awkward fashion; for the fact was that he was stunned by the glorious vision before him.

Felice answered with a slight bow.

"You live far from the fort, and alone," he went on.

The girl gave him a rapid look and made no reply. She felt her strength going and made an effort to look brave.

"One would think you would grow lonesome at times," he continued. The tone was rudely familiar.

"You come to see my father, messieurs! You will tell him what you have to say." There was something in the girl's look that bore a reproof stronger than words.

"Beg pardon, mademoiselle. It is you we seek." The girl's heart beat afresh. "We bring a letter to you from Lieutenant Skelton. You know him?" The man spoke with an insinuating leer.

"For me?" she asked, not noticing the inquiry, and taking with nervous fingers the paper handed to her.

"Lieutenant Skelton!" she exclaimed to herself, half aloud, as she broke the seal. "Father, do we know Lieutenant Skelton?"

"No, my daughter," replied Pierre after a moment's thought, "the name is strange."

"Tell me, messieurs," she cried with a sudden burst of eagerness, forgetting to read the missive that now fluttered open in her hands, "is he tall and strong, with a voice rich and true and——"

"Ha, ha! Tall and strong!" cried one. "Rich and true!" echoed the other. A taunting, mocking laugh broke from the two men. "Why, mademoiselle," said one, controlling himself, "Skelton—beg pardon, the

lieutenant, is just the opposite; short and thin, with a voice—God save the mark! It's what you would call a voice only by way of compliment, and as for it's being true—well, I don't know that a private's got any right to have opinions, eh, Simon?" He nudged the other man, who seemed greatly amused, but managed to blurt out, "Bein' true isn't his long suit. Lady," he went on, "if I were in confidence to describe Lieutenant Skelton, I would call him a prig, jack-a-dandy, what you French would call a *petit-maître*, or, in plain English, a popinjay. The lieutenant is a grand beau. He is a famous judge of pretty women. Pardon me if I say he has made no mistake this time."

Felice looked up suddenly, and the rich colour rushed to her face and neck. Then with burning, set lips she turned to read. She read the note slowly twice over, then the passport accompanying it, her face radiant and serious by turns; then she handed the paper to her father, who was watching her anxiously.

"Tell this Lieutenant Skelton that if I go I shall not need his escort. My Indian woman will accompany me. Tell him that I thank him for his interest. That is all."

As she spoke, the two men, absorbed in the contour and richness of the exquisite form, the proud poise of the head above the slender neck and shoulders, the red blood mantling the transparent skin, were transfixed. They were in the presence of the sort of beauty that humbles and makes one feel his weakness and unworthiness. Her eyes were soft, but there was some-

thing that shone from them which no one would dare disobey. The girl walked to the door and opened it, and before the two men were scarcely conscious of what had happened to them they were outside.

"French hospitality, by Jove!" exclaimed one, as soon as he recovered.

"A pretty rebel!" exclaimed the other.

"Pretty!" returned the first. "It 's a face to dream about and die for."

"And that's about as near as an Englishman will ever get to it."

"And what a mouth! As fresh as roses!"

"And eyes! Proud as Lucifer!"

"Well, no use going further. The vision is too much for me. What's that devil of a Skelton up to now? Playing spider and fly with this beauty?"

"He's a lucky scamp. He's drawn a trump this time."

"He has that. Hamilton was about to take off Skelton's shoulder-straps for some of his woman tricks when he left for Vincennes, and now Lernoult comes in—and Skelton is Lernoult's right bower. They say he played with fire when he tried the blacksmith's daughter, and came away scorched. Well, if he gets this one he's lost nothing."

"You 're right. I wouldn't mind trapping the bird myself."

Felice was watching the departure of the two men from a port-hole in the cabin wall, and as soon as they disappeared under the bank she ran and threw herself

at her father's feet. Resting her clasped hands upon his knees, she looked up at him through tears; but a smile quivered upon her mouth and in her eyes, which broke into a countenance radiant with joy.

"At last, father, at last, deliverance has come for you. Listen!"

She read the letter aloud, slowly and distinctly, looking from time to time into her father's face as if to read his thoughts. "Do you hear, father? Have I not said that God is good, and that He would surely bring us home again? Have I not prayed for this every morning and every night?"

The old man's chin rested on his breast, and he looked fixedly at the floor.

"Father, dear, did you not hear? Shall I read again? Do you not see? This man has offered to us a way of returning to Detroit; where you can have the comforts you have so long needed. Father, father, why are you so sad?"

"No, no, Felice, my dear! I heard you. It is not true. It cannot be true."

"Father!"

"It is a trick, my child. I tell you—a trick." The old man's manner changed; his face took on a startled look; he grasped the girl's hand in his thin, bony fingers and held it convulsively. "These men deceive the Indian, but not Pierre Constant."

"But," she replied coaxingly, "it is the word of an officer who does not know us. See, his name is signed. He can have no desire to harm you."

"No, no, not me!" murmured the old man, "but you—my Felice. They would rob me of you. They let me not alone. They take my fields, my cabin, my boat,—they now take my daughter. No, no, you may not go, my child."

"Listen, father," she replied pleadingly, "Colonel Hamilton promised, before he went away, to give us back our home. May not the new commandant be as good? He has but to hear our story. Jean Guion was saying, only the last time he was here, that the English were doing what they could to win the French settlers to their cause. With the threatened march of the Americans on Detroit, may we not hope for better treatment? Let us try, father. Failure can do us no harm."

"What have they to gain, my daughter, by winning Pierre Constant to their side, which they can not do? Can he cut trees, shovel dirt, stand watch,—can he fight? Can Felice do these things? no! The English do not want Pierre Constant; he points his gun the other way."

"True, father, we would both of us rather than take what belongs to us, but we have our loyalty to the cause of our country, and we have the very necessities of the moment. We will not accept of the kind-lier treatment of us, but we will not sacrifice any principle, nor will we lose an opportunity. Think what it means to us to be driven from our home, and friends, and all that we hold dear. Remember, father, we are the children of a mother. Remember, father, we are the children of a mother."

troit when the injustice was done us. They may be kind and want to help us. Can you not see?"

"I know—I know," said the old man, shaking his head as if to parry thereby the specious argument of the girl. "I ask no justice from these men. When justice comes it will come by those whom God has chosen to right the wrongs of the Colonists. I wait for them—for Washington and the Continental Congress. Have patience, my child; God is indeed good. Let us abide His time."

The old man laid his hand tremblingly on his daughter's head, which was now bowed on his knee. His voice was tender, and yet strong and unyielding. Felice saw the hopelessness of it all, and her breast throbbed with emotion that voiced itself at intervals in half-suppressed sobs. The sombre past cast its shadows ahead; the lonely, ever-narrowing present seemed to stifle her; her father's growing feebleness, her fears of what soon must come to her, alone and helpless, among a people that knew her only as the rebellious daughter of a rebellious father—an outlaw—weighed down upon her sensitive young heart till, well-nigh crushed, it abandoned itself to a passionate distress.

At last the storm subsided. She arose, kissed her father on the forehead, filled his pipe, and handing it to him, went quietly out of the cabin.

CHAPTER XV

A FLOWER-BORDERED path led from Pierre Constant's cabin into the sunless woods nearby, to a spot where nature had fashioned a miniature temple with a thick carpet of fragrant grass and a canopy of vari-coloured leaves, and a young vine had clothed the place with the greenest of tapestries. Here, on the rough bark of a tree that formed the support of it all, Felice had hung a little crucifix of silver,—her mother's,—and here she had erected in her heart an altar. It was her chapel. Here was neither life, motion, nor sound—just the soft air from off the river mingling with the sweet odours of the tangled forest. No knees save hers had pressed its green carpet; through its leafy dome no prayers had ever ascended but hers; sacred it was to no vows other than hers. Here many, many times her girl heart had spoken its inmost secrets and poured out its longings; and here, not once but often, it had well-nigh broken. Here her heart had gained purity and strength, and here her face had taken on that spiritual beauty that the rough men of the wilderness, accustomed to sterner types, wondered at and went away adoring. Just as the most beautiful insects and birds take their

beauty from the loveliest flowers of the fields, so had Felice unconsciously taken from this beautiful environment a surpassing beauty of soul and body, reflecting the rare, luxuriant colour and form about her as the butterfly reflects that of the rose. There was an odour of sanctity about this leafy retreat, as if the very grass and leaves had caught some of the incense of her prayers and retained it.

When Felice left her father's side she went directly to this spot, pushed aside the vines, and entered. She had been there often of late. Sinking upon her knees, and taking the crucifix in her hands, she kissed it passionately; then, looking with tearful eyes up through the canopy of leaves, she prayed.

As she prayed, all her past life, everything around about her at this moment, seemed dissolved into thin shadows, fading farther and farther into the night. One thing only was a reality. Warm, true blood coursing through a man's hand had throbbed against her own; a spark from a heroic soul had struck fire with hers; a breath of sympathy akin to love had touched her face and kindled a warmth that even now suffused it with colour; words more musical than she had ever dreamed had fallen upon her hungry heart. And what if she prayed for him, and, looking from the cross up through the leafy canopy into the skies, asked that God would let her feel that touch and hear that voice again!

She took from its place of concealment amid the leaves the ring he had given her to keep till they met

again, and put it on her finger. It was his mother's. Why should he give it to her? Her heart bounded as for the hundredth time a hope she dared not express even to herself sprang up unbidden, and then the chapel became radiant; a light, warm breath from off the river stirred the leaves and seemed to her myriad voices of love and life; a mist gathered before her eyes, the pain at her heart went away, and she was happy. Then again she pushed aside the curtain of leaves and stood on the threshold of life strong for its duties, warmed with the touch of human love, and strong in her faith.

Her resolution was now fixed. She would obey her father. He was right. She would not go to Detroit. She would go to him and tell him so. She tossed her hair back from her face, bound it in place with a ribbon of clover, and with a calm, resolute spirit approached the cabin. A few steps from the door she stopped, and gazed fixedly out upon the river with the conscious faith that by it he who should release her from her bondage would one day come.

Suddenly a voice fell upon her ear. Some one was with her father. Was it Jacques Guion? She approached nearer and listened. It was Jacques's father—her father's friend. She was glad. Jean Guion was the only man in all the world to whom, in his exile, her father could turn for companionship. Of what were they talking so earnestly? She heard a name—strange to her—"Robert Norvell." Instinctively she connected the name with her heart's longing. Was it

right for her to stop here and listen? No, she would go in. Quickly she went forward and entered the open door.

"*Bonjour*, Monsieur Guion," she said, advancing with both hands outstretched.

"*Bonjour*, Mademoiselle Felice," replied the visitor, rising and saluting the girl with the air of a courtier doing homage to a queen. "You are very beautiful this morning. You are always beautiful. But you are pale. You must row, run, jump. You must have red cheeks. I send Jacques to take you fishing. Perhaps I better pinch your cheeks. No?" Laughing, she had taken refuge behind her father's chair. "French girls are not pale-faced. You love some one. Is it not so, Pierre? Maybe Jacques. No? Ah, I know! You wrote me a letter. The soldier of the Revolution! You love him! Ah, now the red comes! You are not now the beautiful lily; you are the rose! I have told your father about him. You are a bad girl not to tell him yourself. But you never fool Jean Guion."

At the mention of her father the girl for the first time noted Pierre Constant's manner. He sat pale and rigid, looking straight ahead of him, and seeming to hear and see nothing of the playful humour of his old friend. His face bore every evidence of distress.

"Father, father, are you ill? Why do you look so? What have you been saying, Monsieur Guion?" She was at the old man's side, bending over him anxiously.

"I—like—not—this—story," he said slowly. "You know this—this Robert Norvell?"

"No, father, I know no Robert Norvell."

The old man turned sternly upon his visitor.

"You say my daughter wrote you a letter and sent to you this spy?"

"Yes, my friend, he brought me a letter from Felice," answered Jean; then he turned bewildered toward the girl and appealed to her.

"You say no, Felice?"

"You have the letter?" Pierre interposed.

"No. I——"

"You never had a letter. Your Jacques wants my Felice. Felice sent him away. You come now with this story to frighten us. I do not know this Norvell. Felice does not know him. We never heard the name." There was a frightened look in the man's face.

"Felice, you wrote me a letter?" Jean asked, looking pleadingly at the girl.

The girl hesitated. In her bewilderment over her father's strange conduct she was slow to speak.

"You leave my house," cried Pierre, attempting in vain to rise. "You believe me not. You believe not Felice. She has told you we know not Robert Norvell—this spy. Go, and come not here again."

Jean Guion was not a Frenchman to take a blow and wait for another. He went at once to the door, and, turning on the threshold, shouted:

"Felice knows Robert Norvell. She loves him. He is now in Detroit. My Jacques saw him there. Felice does not love my Jacques, so Jacques goes to Detroit to-morrow night, and at the ball he will tell Felice's

secret. Norvell will die, and Felice—ha, ha! Jean Guion came to help you. You tell him to go. He does not stay. *Au revoir*, mademoiselle. I wish you joy.”

Jean Guion shut the door and went laughing aloud down to the river. Pierre Constant, his eyes shining with a delirious glare, made an effort to rise and follow him, but fell back gasping for breath, then sank into a semi-conscious stupor from which he aroused himself at times only enough to repeat, as in a dream, the name of Felice and that of him whom Jean Guion had called the “spy.”

All through the day the old man seemed dazed and stupefied. Felice tremblingly ministered to his comfort in such ways as were known to these simple dwellers of the woods. By evening he was resting easily, yet his mind was apparently struggling with a great problem, and at times his head fell upon his breast and a moan escaped his lips; at such times Felice hurried to his side, and, stroking his cold hands and brow, tried to cheer him with a feigned air of gayety.

Long into the evening they sat together. The old man’s mind was apparently on some dark chapter of the past. Out of a prolonged silence he would suddenly start and look about him as if in fear; then in a vague way he would describe some awful picture that seemed floating before his eyes, with his face pale as alabaster, and his features drawn tense and eyes staring like one gone mad.

Finally the wick burned low in its socket, and Felice arose from her seat at her father’s side to pre-

pare for bed. The old man's eyes followed her every movement as if he expected her to disappear from his sight. Then suddenly, after a prolonged silence, he said calmly:

"To-morrow, my daughter, you will go to Detroit. You will go to the home of Antoine Moreau, near the river bank. He will help you find Robert Norvell. Tell him, when you have found him, what Jean Guion has told you. Bid him escape before it is too late. Tell him to beware of Jacques Guion and his evil tongue."

"Father!" she cried, springing to his side and throwing her arms about his neck. "Do you mean it?"

"Yes," he replied resolutely. "You will take Marmjuda with you and come not back till you have delivered your message."

The girl's heart gave a leap of joy.

"And to the ball, to meet Captain Lernoult and tell him our story!" she exclaimed, pressing her hands together convulsively.

"Pierre Constant asks nothing of the English. But save Robert Norvell." His voice and face were strangely earnest.

"Yes, father, I will do as you say. But if they do justice to us without my asking; what then?"

"I shall die here, my daughter." Then he paused and looked on her with indescribable tenderness. "But for you—yes, Felice. Go, but remember, save that man." She noted the piercing fervour of his eyes, but in her excitement she thought it not unnatural.

From that moment Felice Constant was in a tremor of anticipated joy. She was to see Detroit again, to visit, perhaps, the grave of her mother, to see again the home of her childhood, at last to tell to a willing ear the story of her father's wrongs, and last—oh, the joy of it!—to save the life of this Robert Norvell.

The truth had dawned upon her that this man was the hero of her dreams. Felice had noted her father's strange behaviour during the day at each mention of this man's name. She had ascribed it to his fear that in some way what she had done might put her life in jeopardy, or that this man might come between them—between father and daughter. And now what could mean this sudden change—this firm resolve that she should put her life in peril for this stranger? It would be necessary that Pierre remain alone for a day and night while she, trusting herself to the care only of her Indian woman, should go to the village which he had taught her to shun as being the abode of wicked men and the stronghold of their enemies. She thought it all over by herself when her father had retired, and finally declared that it was characteristic of a brave and loyal soul such as his. She saw in it only the self-abnegation of the hero, the fortitude which despises comfort and invites suffering, the resolution which courts danger if only it be for the cause. And she would prove to him that his confidence in her was well placed, and that, though not a man, she could serve the cause which they both loved, and for which they were ready to give up what little was left to them of property and life.

She lit another candle and turned to an old chest that, standing in the chimney corner, served as a seat. With trembling hands she lifted the lid. She had done this often before, but never with such a beating heart. For a moment her eyes gazed on the contents—a pretty petticoat and bodice of delicate silk, dainty kerchiefs, satin slippers, and a shawl of lace of intricate design. She had often gazed into this box, and taking out the finery piece by piece, had feasted her eyes upon them. In gazing upon them it seemed to her she was looking into the face of her mother. Her heart held a strange emotion; often she had wept over them. It had always done her good to look into this old chest, and she had never put the dainty things away without gaining strength and courage, and without silently thanking God for her blessings. But now there was something more than the mere pleasure of possession; she was to wear these beautiful things—and to a ball. They had suddenly become something more than the memorials of a dead past—the remembrance of a mother; they were to help her win for her father and herself a liberty that for him meant years more of life, and for her everything for which a young heart yearns. She wondered if she would look as her mother looked, and she smiled in remembrance of her father's oft-repeated words that she was her mother's very image, in face, in form, and in manner—that sweet, beautiful mother of Pierre Constant's daily story, around whom his words and her imaginings had thrown a halo of tenderest glory.

Yes, she would wear these beautiful things to the ball! No one was near who would see her; she would try them on. One by one she brought them to the light. With a deftness born of nature, but with trembling fingers, she exchanged her simple gown for the petticoat of white silk covered with filmy crepe, over which again hung festoons of lilac ribbon and dainty lace. The bodice fitted closely, from shoulder to hip, her untamed figure, which had never known a stay, and under it swelled her half-exposed bosom. Lovingly she smoothed the creases and folds, freshened up the bows and knots of ribbon, and shook out the lace at sleeves and neck. She drew on the stockings, so filmy that they almost betrayed the secret they were supposed to guard, and then the dainty slippers, with their ribbons crossed and tied around her trim ankles.

She wondered if she looked then as that gentle mother had looked. She was tempted to awaken her father and ask him. A small mirror threw back to her a pitifully meagre reproduction of the charming figure that stood in Pierre Constant's lonely cabin at that moment. Then she hung a necklace about her shapely neck and blushed with consciousness of her loveliness as she fastened at her breast a locket that contained a little curl of silken hair,—it might have been her own. Long she gazed into this mute witness of the dead; slowly she unclasped the locket, and, holding it in both her hands, covered it with kisses. Then, suddenly realizing her loneliness, her poverty, and the

peril of her position, she cried with words that sounded like sobs:

“No, no, I am but a poor French girl, the daughter of an exile. No, these are not for Felice. These beautiful things become me not. I must not wear them”—and, with tears raining down her cheeks, she disrobed and laid the pretty things away.

It was a feverish head that lay pillowed that night in its meshes of dark hair, ere sleep brought its benediction of peace to Felice Constant.

CHAPTER XVI

BEFORE the young French girl had closed her eyes in sleep that night she had laid her plans for the morrow. Her one fear was that Jacques Guion would get the start of her and reach Detroit before she did, and communicate with the authorities before she could warn Robert Norvell. How she was to enter the village in broad daylight without danger of her presence becoming known to Lieutenant Skelton puzzled her, but at last she hit upon the plan of finding a place of concealment near the town where she could see Jacques coming up the river; and if, as seemed likely to her, Jacques should not come till evening, she would be enabled to pass the gates and have an hour or so before Jacques's arrival in which to communicate with Antoine Moreau, and through him with Robert Norvell, before the Lieutenant would be expecting her.

She determined to rise before break of day, and with Marmjuda paddle to the head of Turkey Island, and there conceal herself among the bushes at a point where she could look far down the river on the east side and see Jacques's canoe as it approached. At its first appearance she would set out for Detroit, keeping

the island between Jacques and herself, until, reaching the mouth of the Savoyard, she would leave it and hasten to enter the village.

At the first sign of morning she was up and busy with her preparations. Her toilet was modest and quickly made. Her father was made comfortable for the day. A simple breakfast had already been spread by Marmjuda, and something prepared for mid-day. Then, kissing her father, bidding him keep a stout heart, and promising to return with good news, she and her Indian woman were soon gliding along in the semi-darkness, in and out along the windings of the marshy shore toward the head of Grosse Ile. At this point they pushed out against the current and headed for Turkey Island, that lay indistinct and gray a short distance farther up the river. The little craft in which they rode, seemingly conscious of its responsibility, responded easily to the stroke and sped onward as if on invisible wings.

Just as the sun, like a great ball of fire, peeped above the Canadian woods, they stepped ashore on Turkey Island, pulled the light canoe high on the bank, and sought a place where they might get an unobstructed view of the course down the river. This found, the Indian woman sat cross-legged on the ground and began the vigil that was to extend throughout the long day. Her keen vision, from generations of training on river and plain, could be depended on to note the first sign of Jacques Guion's coming, so Felice, hidden from any possible passer-by on the river or

the opposite shores by a great rock, amused herself gathering stones and constructing a rude little oven in the sand; then, collecting dry twigs for a fire, she placed them beneath the stones and laughed as she thought some lone fisherman would one day wonder what good fairy had visited the place.

As the sun rose high in the heavens she sought a cool place in the shade of the bushes and slept. Awakening refreshed a little later, she prepared a simple meal from the little store they had brought with them, and, after they had eaten of it, she took the place of Marmjuda on watch.

Slowly the long hours of the afternoon wore away, until, as the lengthening shadows told the story of approaching night, she began to fear that her plan had failed and that Jacques had gone the day before, or that, instead of coming by the river, he had walked to Sandwich and found some one to row him across to the village.

Had she known the fear felt by Jacques Guion of meeting Robert Norvell again on the streets of Detroit she could have dismissed all anxiety, for Jacques, remembering his two severe drubbings at the hands of this man, had no intention of going to Detroit on his mission of revenge till night fell, when he would be able to work his scheme under its friendly cover.

The evening was well advanced when Jacques stole out from home, and, entering his canoe, pointed its nose up stream. Scarcely had he got started when Marmjuda's sharp eyes detected the moving spot

on the smooth surface of the current away to the south. Felice, looking intently as she might, could see nothing, but, trusting confidently the word of her servant, bade her launch the boat and make with all speed for the mouth of the Savoyard. A straight line to this point led them in a course completely hidden from the view of the half-breed, were he ever so keen, and were he ever so suspicious of such a move. Under the vigorous strokes of the two women the canoe soon struck the quiet waters along the shore, and just as darkness settled about them it came to land at a place familiar to the Indian, to whom, indeed, every foot of this ground was known from childhood.

Felice had planned to enter the west gate, as being the entrance where the Lieutenant would least expect her, visitors by the river landing almost invariably at the wharf on the river front. As she set foot on the bank of the little stream whose name was associated so tenderly in her mind with all she held dear in her past life, she felt a tremor of mingled pain and pleasure. If it were but day she could see the very spot where she was born! At last she was standing on the ground where she had played the innocent games of childhood! A sweet sense of home-coming gave her a quiet joy that a fear of the uncertain future could not entirely dissipate.

Drawing the boat into the reeds, where it would be safe and easily found when wanted, the two women advanced toward the village, which lay but a few rods away. Felice led, her servant following close on.

The French girl had, in the fullness of her joy over her double mission to save her father and Robert Norvell, stopped not once to measure the danger. In her excess of enthusiasm and her immense faith in herself and all mankind, save Jacques Guion, she had left no room for forebodings nor thought once of failure; but now that she was face to face with it all, her heart stood still for a moment.

"Take my hand, Marmjuda," she said. "You will stay beside me. You will help me, good, good friend."

Marmjuda, faithful but taciturn after her kind, uttered a syllable of assurance, took the slight, trembling hand of her young mistress in hers, and together they walked up the path to the gate. The frowning palisades soon barred their way, and a rough voice called, "Who's there?"

For a moment Felice stood as if stunned by the suddenness of the call out of the darkness; then, summoning her strength, she answered:

"A woman. I come——"

"Who are you, and what do you here at this time of night? Who is with you?"

"I am Felice Constant of Grosse Ile," she replied tremblingly. "I am Pierre Constant's daughter, at your service, and this is my Indian woman."

"Old man Constant's daughter, eh? I've heard tell of you and your traitor father. Come in. I have orders to let you pass."

At this the sentinel threw open the wicket gate through which he had been peering.

"I thank you, monsieur," she replied, stepping past the sentinel and drawing after her Marmjuda, whom she still held by the hand.

"No thanks to me, mademoiselle. My way for it, and you'd get back home same way you came and in a hurry. I don't like women prowling around alone at night, any way. This doesn't give you a good name, my beauty. You 're here for no good purpose, or my name's not Carter. You haven't a kiss for a fellow, have you?"

Felice stepped back, dragging the Indian woman after her.

"Come, Marmjuda, quick!"

"Not so, my darling. We have orders to keep you here till your lover comes. You see, he didn't know which way you would take, and he's left orders, if you came this way, to send him word and entertain you till he arrives; so, as good soldiers, we do as we are told. Here, Jonathan, tell the lieutenant two ladies want to see him." At this a man, uttering a half-smothered oath, arose slowly from the ground, where he had evidently been napping, and moved off down the narrow street toward the river.

"Coming to the ball, I suppose," continued Carter, addressing the now thoroughly frightened girl. "It's a damned shame the lieutenant didn't send for you. There's a score of us would have given a good round sum to go fetch old man Constant's daughter, just for a glimpse of her face, which they say is charming. You see your reputation has gone before you. But,

my word for it, and if I hang for it, I'll say it, better keep an eye on that lover of yours; you'll need that Indian. He's turned many a girl's head before he turned yours,—and some that have passed being girls and have girls of their own—more's the shame Governor Hamilton sent him back to Montreal once for his woman capers, but he had a pull, somehow, at headquarters, and he got back, and now with Captain Lernoult he has full swing. I hate to see you coming here alone, and I don't mind telling you. I couldn't look my Catherine straight in the eye to-night when I go home if I didn't tell you. You'll pardon me, and not tell the lieutenant, will you?"

"It is very good of you, sir," she answered in almost a whisper, "but I came here on business for my father, and I must hasten."

"What business can Pierre Constant have here? Why must it be done at night? And Skelton—what has he to do with it? Strange business that you must come at this time of night and right into Lieutenant Skelton's arms. I tell you I don't like the looks of it. But it's none of my business."

"Please, sir, may I seek for Lieutenant Skelton myself? This delay—you do not know how important it is that I go now."

"What's your hurry? You're safe here. I'd like to please you; but I've got my orders, and orders must be obeyed. Here comes the lieutenant now. It's his step. Be careful what you say, mademoiselle. I meant to do you a good turn."

In another moment the individual referred to came up. The sentinel saluted.

"You may go, Carter. Here's something for your pains." The man took the proffered coin with mumbled thanks and fell back a step or two into the darkness.

"Pardon, mademoiselle," began Skelton, his voice and manner the very acme of honeyed politeness. "I meant not to keep you waiting. But the fact is you gave me the slip. I was expecting you at the wharf. You were not trying to escape me, were you?"

"I had expected to meet you at the ball," Felice replied timidly.

"That would have been gallant of me, now, wouldn't it, after letting you come all this way to see me, not to have met you on your arrival. No, no! I could not do that with Mademoiselle Constant, I assure you. You are not alone!"

His surprise was assumed.

"My woman, Marmjuda, is with me."

"Why, certainly. How stupid of me. You sent me word. You could not come alone, of course. She can stay here at the gate till you return. Here, Carter, take the squaw to your house and have her stay there till I send for her."

The sentinel addressed stepped forward.

"Pray, sir," cried Felice, clinging close to Marmjuda, a tone of intense fear in her voice, "she must not leave me. If she cannot be with me I must go back. I promised my father she should stay near, and I must keep my promise."

"Surely, mademoiselle, you do not mistrust me," replied Skelton in an injured tone. "The daughter of Pierre Constant need have no fear with Lieutenant Skelton. You shall be as safe with me as with a hundred lazy squaws."

Felice uttered a quick exclamation, but Skelton went on:

"I have heard much of your beauty and your goodness, and nothing calls forth all the soldier in a man like unprotected loveliness. Come, I will escort you to the ballroom. I long to look again into your face—that face of which all the village is talking, and which, since my eyes have seen it once, has caused them to lose every other vision. Come!"

His manner was seductive in the extreme. Carter made as if to lead the squaw away, but his manner was hesitating.

"No, no, not without Marmjuda!" cried the girl.

"Then let the squaw follow," Skelton returned testily. It were better thus than to have a scene and perhaps lose his prize. He offered her his arm. She touched it timidly. The officer noted, with a smile unseen in the darkness, that her hand trembled. He longed to take it in his, but he dared not, yet. The man's jovial manner now returned, and his honeyed breath poured a constant stream of flattery and small talk into the girl's ears. She scarcely heard a word. She knew that the guests were already gathering at the ballroom. "Jacques Guion is even now here and telling his story!" she said to herself. Oh, how she up-

braided herself for thus delaying her visit till night. If he should be discovered! If Robert Norvell should die! And all because she had not done her duty! The thought made her faint, and once she thought she would fall, but a sense of her position gave her strength.

The man's tones were insinuating and at times boastful. He was seeking, by all the arts of the accomplished libertine, to win his way into the girl's heart and confidence. He boasted of his influence and his power over his fellow officers, and of his conquests with the ladies of the village. But none of these latter compared with the girls of London; they were all a bore in comparison with those he had left at home. Those he had met here were but suited for the sport of his idle moments, good enough for passing amusement, to dispel the *ennui*, but give him the girls of London. Then he told her that she reminded him of them. Not since he had left home had he heard such a voice, and seen so fair a form and so graceful a mien. She reminded him of one he loved better than all the world, and he had never expected, now that she was gone, to behold in this New World another such. If one half of what he remembered of her face as he had seen it in her father's cottage on Grosse Ile proved true, when in the light of the ballroom he should behold her again, he would be transported, and he begged of her that then she would frown a little to bring him back to earth.

The girl scarcely heard all this. At times she was

barely aware of his perfumed existence. Her brain was busy with a problem of life and death that waited on her quick solution. But one voice penetrated the holy of holies of her heart—it was that of Robert Norvell, as from the river that night he had bidden her keep the ring till they met again. His adieu kept sounding in her ears to-night like the cry of a brave soul going out to die for her.

“You are not *jolie* to-night?” Skelton said after a pause; for he had noted her abstraction of manner. “You must be gay. It is a ball, and you are to be its queen.”

“I came not here to dance,” she replied quietly, trying to hide her anxiety.

“Then for what, pray?” he asked quickly.

“To do as you bade me in the letter—see the commandant and tell the story of my father’s wrongs and plead for justice.”

“Right, of course! Strange I should forget it. A pretty woman always sends my wits wool-gathering. But you cannot gain your point with Captain Lernoult with sighs and downcast eyes—especially when those eyes were made to reach men’s hearts. I may as well tell you we are playing a game of strategy with Captain Lernoult. At present he knows your father only as a rebel to the King. He does not know my purpose in bringing you here.”

“Then you have not told him our story?” the girl asked, a world of anxiety in her tone.

“Not yet, but——”

"But you told me you had done so." She stopped abruptly and withdrew her hand from his arm.

"Oh, yes! I told you so, I know; but how else was I to get you here and let the captain see you? The captain knows you are coming, but he does not know your errand. He must not for a time. Breathe it to him, and your life and mine are endangered. You are to enter the ballroom on my arm. You will be the most beautiful woman there. You will flash your beauty upon Captain Lernout. You will entrance, bewilder him. He is susceptible. You will take him by storm. You will captivate his senses—tangle his hand and foot in the meshes of your glorious eyes. He will make love to you. He has a soldier's courage, but a fool's vanity. You will accept his advances and humour him, and then—then—you can make terms with him—your own terms." He bent toward her and whispered his words with eager breath. Felice gave a little cry of pain and retreated a step. They had been nearing the long, low building whence issued sounds of music and laughter, telling that guests had arrived and dancing had begun.

"Was it for this you brought me here?" she cried.

"Yes, my pretty one; and when before did a girl capture a British fort and all by means of dimples and pretty eyes?"

"I am to play the wanton as the price of my father's liberty? Oh, no, no, you do not mean it!" She covered her face with her hands.

"You call it by hard names. You have only to be

your own sweet self. Come, mademoiselle, the dance. I long to see your beauty. A triumph awaits you."

"No, no; I cannot," she cried.

"You must," the man replied in low, stern tones, grasping one of her wrists with a firm grip. "Make one attempt to return or escape me, and I shall call a guard and you will know what it means to play with Lieutenant Skelton. Do as I tell you, and you are safe. Resist and—there now, this foolishness has gone far enough. You'll spoil your pretty eyes. I'm not so bad as all that. Come, trust me, and I will unsay all I have said. I will be your gallant knight, and the first man that dares utter a word of offense to you will have to answer to me, be he Captain Lernoult himself. I was wrong. You shall have the opportunity you want, and Lernoult shall listen to you. Come, Felice." His voice was now tender and persuasive.

"Wait, monsieur, wait! Let me think! Marmjuda! Let me speak with her a moment." She turned in the direction of the Indian woman, who stood a few paces in the rear.

"Be not gone long," said Skelton. "Every moment you are away from me seems an age. Advise the woman to stay at the back of the house."

Felice sped swiftly to Marmjuda's side.

"Good, good Marmjuda! Your knife, quick. Here, place it in my bosom. The cold steel will stop the throbbing. There, there, good friend! Now go to the house of Antoine Moreau, find Robert Norvell—him I told you of—him you took across the river that

night—tell him Jacques Guion is in Detroit to tell his secret. Tell him Felice Constant, of Grosse Ile, sent you. Now go quick, Marmjuda, quick! Then meet me here again. Go—no, wait till we go in, then go swift as an arrow.”

Felice returned to the side of the lieutenant. “I am now ready to go in,” she said, with a voice and manner singularly composed.

CHAPTER XVII

THE guests from Sandwich were just entering the ballroom when the two reached the door, and a boisterous welcome was in progress. The musicians were playing a lively air, and the scene was animated, with bowings and curtseyings and witty salutations and badinage parried with flashing repartee.

Felice and her companion entered almost unobserved. The lieutenant, obsequious in his effort to atone for his self-confessed fault, bent every energy to be gallant and win the girl's approval. He assisted her to remove her hood and cape, kneeled to tie the ribbons of a shoe that had loosened, and offered his pocket mirror that she might adjust the mass of hair that threatened riot about her face. His air was easy and his bow graceful. Every muscle and nerve seemed perfectly disciplined to perform its function, even to the bend of an elbow. Filled as he was with the gossip of the fort as to the beauty of old man Constant's daughter, he was ill-prepared for the revelation that burst upon him when he at last stood gazing upon her in the warm light of the ballroom. For a few moments this past-master of the art of flattery lost his wits and stood transfixed, his eyes drinking in the glorious vision. She seemed

something more than human. The soft rose in her cheeks, the clearness of her eyes, told of the body's virtue. Health and springing blood were in her bearing. Her graces were unstudied. Her figure was free and pliant. The face was a rounded oval; each feature as perfectly formed as heart could desire. Her admirably modelled chin melted into the neck with soft and graceful curves. Her dark hair flowed in natural ringlets over her soft neck and shoulders, framing her face as in a cloud. Gloriously pure were the sweet lines of her girlish figure.

Dropping into a seat at her side, Skelton leaned a little forward toward her, drinking in her beauty with all his eyes, then whispered, almost breathed, in her ear, "Mademoiselle, you are magnificent. The half has not been told me. It is a mingling of heaven and earth. I am your lover, your slave." The tone seemed designed to pierce her inmost soul.

Felice gave no sign of hearing the man's words or seeing the fervour of his eyes. She took his proffered gallantries unconsciously, and heard, without understanding, his fervent expressions of admiration.

The scene was novel and bewildering to her. Varicoloured lanterns swinging amid bowers of green cast a warm, dreamy glow over the room; the rafters, beams, and columns of the edifice were festooned and wound with evergreen till not a sign of their rough surface showed to the eye. Against this pleasing background were fastened great bunches of sunflowers and bouquets of wild blossoms, sending their fragrance through

the air as if to defy the plenteous rivalry of sweet-smelling damsels and perfumed dandies. Yards and yards of clover rope were hung everywhere in graceful loops, while at the head of the room was an enormous painting of George III, done by a local artist of more zeal and loyalty than real skill as a portrait-painter. There were two doors to the long room, one serving as entrance and exit, and the other as the introduction to a bower or booth where refreshments were served. The music was the best the country afforded, being furnished by the trained musicians of the King's troops with instruments of string and brass against a background of drums and cymbals.

The women were dressed in the varied styles and colours of the day, with hair fashioned in ways wonderful and mysterious. Arms were bare. Bodices were cut low, well becoming the fresh, deep-bosomed beauty of women who lived lives of freedom in the open air, retired early, rose with the sun, and ate simple, wholesome food prepared by their own hands. With tapering waists and hoop-petticoats supporting skirts covered with festoons of flowers and wreaths, with rows of lace on sleeves, with curls and puffs and knots and waving plumes, with rouge on face, and with dainty slippers tied on with ribbons, they mimicked the styles of Paris, which set the fashion for the world.

The men were a motley crowd of soldiers and civilians, the former resplendent in gold braid and polished swords, the latter frizzled and powdered and silk-stockinged, with buckles and cravats, ruffles of lace,

and silk coats and vests of delicate colours, albeit a few from among the humbler, homelier set came dressed in homespun, but making a brave show with sturdy chests and legs, and florid, healthy faces.

To the eyes and ears of Felice Constant the sights and sounds were entrancing. Her senses fairly swam. She felt she could sit there forever drinking in the novelty of the scene. She was a true French girl, by nature vivacious and warm of blood; but all this had been chilled by years of isolation and denial, with an old sorrow and a new fear ever gnawing at her heart. It was now as if the real Felice was crying out within her, bidding her eyes to shine, her cheeks to glow, her breast to throb, her feet to move in unison with the music's rhythm. She had come into her own again.

Her heart beat wildly as with a burst of melody the music entered upon a strain that carried intoxication on its wing. She placed her hand on her heart as if its beating hurt her; her companion noted, as the sleeve fell away, how white and round was her arm and how nobly it curved to the elbow. Her eyes swam with the delirium of the motion before her, and she scarcely saw the gaze of men and women fastened upon her, nor heeded the play of inquiry that flitted over faces as they passed. The music seemed composed especially for her.

Then a voice at her side, which had seemed far away, now came close upon her. She heard it murmur something low and tender. She felt herself rise and her fingers touch his. Then she was borne away in strong

arms into the amorous sea of motion. At that moment she felt her old life whirled away with the movement of the dance, and a new life born within her—glorious, divine. Over and over again her ears caught the insidious, tempting, pleading tones of a voice that trembled with passion, and then a note of triumph as it poured its flattery into her hungry soul: She was the most beautiful woman in all the world; she did not dance—she had wings—she floated as on a cloud; she danced like the girls of old London—yes, better, infinitely lighter, more graceful; the dance came to fairies like her by nature—her feet were the daintiest and swiftest; her movement the most graceful; her eyes, her hair, her cheeks, her waist, her feet, the most adorable—all this and more she heard again and again.

Her partner was looking down at her out of ardent eyes. She felt his arms drawn closer about her, and his breath grow warmer on her cheek. The lights grew dim and distant. The music seemed to come from off the river, float away, and then lose itself. She felt her senses reel. She sank exhausted into a seat, and for some moments had no conception of her position, from time to time passing her hand over her brow as if to efface a picture or a memory, or to wipe away the stain of a touch. The man at her side had gone to fetch wine. He returned, and she heard him say, "Take this, mademoiselle, you are faint. The room is warm."

"No, no, it is not that," she replied with a gesture of disapproval. "I am not used to it all—the lights, the

music, the dance. A sip of water, monsieur, and I shall be able to leave the place."

He handed her the wine.

"A rare Bordeaux, mademoiselle; it is better for you than water."

She drank it, grateful for the moisture it offered to her fevered lips. A moment more, and the life of the draught was in her veins; her eyes sparkled; the colour came beneath the transparent skin; her lips, moistened with the blushing fluid, looked like the opening petals of a new rose. Her hair, which had been bound lightly at the back, now fell in a shower upon her neck and shoulders and framed itself close about her face. A score of men pressed about her companion, asking for the favour of an introduction. Inquiry was on every lip as to how the daughter of Pierre Constant had found entrance to the ball. Men stormed and raved over her luscious beauty, and women pouted and said tart things about her lack of modesty and her evident ill-breeding. Every man envied Skelton, and every woman hated him—some for good reason, others for none at all, save that he devoted himself wholly to this ill-dressed country beauty.

The music resumed its delirious sway. The heart of the French girl was on fire. Again in the arms of her escort, who now seemed so strong, so necessary to her life for the moment, she floated away. It was but a repetition of the former dance. The fever in her blood beamed from her eyes, played about her lips, and trembled in her bosom. The barriers of her passion-

ate French nature had broken away, and the warm stream was at its flood tide.

The man had triumphed. His cool cunning had won over her impulsive innocence. He would push his advantage. He courted and caressed. He used adjective upon adjective, and ransacked the storehouse of his brain for compliments, and these he wove into a thread of sentiment that bade fair to bind her hand and foot in its windings, and then he whispered with a lovesick sigh, "To think all this must end." He hoped for a look of regret; he had gone far enough to expect it, and this would open the way for a proposal he dared not make to her sober senses. For a moment the girl's mind and heart swung to their moorings. Storm-tossed, lost in the intoxication of a new, subtle experience, blinded by the glare of beauty, burned by the heat in her blood, she struggled, caught at the man's words as at an anchor, and cried, "Yes, it must end—and now." Then, breaking from his arms, she sped in and out among the dancers till, finding her cape and hood, she threw them about her and rushed to the door.

Skelton, stunned by the suddenness of it all, for a moment stood irresolute; then, finding himself watched by several who had seen the incident, quickly followed the fleeing girl. He came up with her just as she was leaving the room, and touched her shoulder lightly. She half turned, showing a drawn, frightened face.

"No, mademoiselle, you must not go. You have not yet seen Captain Lernoult. You will lose all you came

for. The captain will shortly arrive, and you must meet him. Upon this depends your father's safety and comfort. You are fatigued. Come back, and we will not dance. I was selfish to tire you thus, but the joy of being near you, of looking into your eyes, of holding you close, overcame my judgment. If your beauty so entrances, have you aught of blame for men born to be its victims? But I will not look at you. I will be deaf and dumb and blind, if only you will let me be near you. Let us walk out of doors till Captain Lernout comes. The air blows cool from the river. It will rest and quiet you."

It was time for Marmjuda to return. This thought had brought the girl to her senses but a moment before. Without a word she went out, followed closely by her companion.

In the open air Felice recovered her mental poise. An icy chill crept over her heart. She now hated and feared the man beside her with all the strength of her passionate being. She could have cried out in the anguish of her remorse over her weakness and the advantage she had given him, had she been alone. But now she needed all her courage and wit to escape his presence in safety and yet accomplish the twofold object of her mission.

The man, blindly infatuated and stirred to the depths of his vile nature, failed to comprehend the change that had turned the blushing, yielding girl into a self-centred, resolute one; and, now that they were alone, he pressed his attentions more ardently than ever.

“From now on and for ever, my dearest Felice, I am your slave. You have but to command and I obey. I love you! I adore you! I have seen no other woman! You must not leave me to-night. I cannot live without you. I will die. You will stay here with me, and to-morrow we shall go to Father L’Aroux and become one by the forms of the Church. But to-night you are mine. No, no, do not draw away! Listen! It will be necessary that some one see you and your servant leave the village to-night. I will escort you to the west gate. The squaw shall follow. You two will go out, and the guards will see you. I will then, on some pretext, dismiss them for the night; they will make no objection, you may be sure. They will deliver to me the key of the gate. Once outside, you will bid the squaw go home and tell your father you are safe and will see him on the morrow. You will then return to the gate. I will receive you there, and we will go where none but the good God may know, and to-morrow——” He leaned forward as if to embrace the girl, when with a cry she fled from him down the walk to where stood Marmjuda.

“Save me! Help! Marmjuda!” cried the terrified girl, throwing herself into her servant’s arms. “And quick, quick, tell me, did you find Robert Norvell? Was he there? Did you tell him?”

“Marmjuda no find him. He here.” Thus saying, the woman pointed in the direction of the ballroom.

“What do you mean, Marmjuda? Robert Norvell here among his enemies? It cannot be. They are de-

ceiving you. Go, go, seek him again." She had forgotten for the moment the peril of her own position. The Indian woman made no start to obey.

"Marmjuda no find him. He here." Again she pointed in the direction of the light that streamed from the open door of the ballroom.

At this juncture Skelton came up.

"Pardon, mademoiselle," he said in his sweetest tones. "You must not leave me; your beauty drove me mad."

Felice turned upon him a look which in the light of day must have driven nails into his conscience. Nor did he note the significant movement of her hand to her breast. The touch of steel, together with the thought that Robert Norvell was close at hand, gave her courage.

"Leave me, sir; you have deceived me; you have sought to take advantage of me in my defenseless condition. Is this your English breeding? Is this an English officer? For shame!"

The very firmness of her voice emboldened her. She felt her limbs grow resolute and her form straighten. She went on:

"I shall return to the dance—but alone. Touch me with your vile hand, and I am no longer a child weak and submissive. See—I can protect myself." He caught the gleam of a knife. She sprang past him and in a moment was lost in a crowd of new arrivals, who proved to be Captain Lernoult and a group of *officers* with their ladies and a motley collection of

hangers-on and curiosity-seekers from among the young and old of the village, who had gathered at the door to see the exhibition of costumes and fine manners.

Felice could not enter at once for the press, so she stood somewhat apart, but near enough effectually to protect her from any rudeness on the part of Skelton. She heard the commandant's name called, and saw a pompous, heavily built man in gorgeous red and gold turn just at the threshold and with a frown upon his red face receive a whispered message from a subordinate.

"Egad, that scallawag again! And will he not give me a moment's rest? Right here in the midst of our entertainment! I tell you there is no danger. The rebels are lost in the swamps two hundred miles away. The gates are guarded. That's enough at least for to-night. If the fellow's in the village, bad luck to him. He must get out to do us harm. When the rat's in the trap we need not bother. We'll catch and kill him when we please. Who's captain of the watch to-night?"

"Lieutenant Skelton," some one answered.

"Where is he?" demanded the captain.

"Here, sir, at your service," answered the officer inquired for, who had come up just in time to hear his name.

"Where have you been? We waited for you a good half-hour, till now our guests have arrived and we were not here to welcome them. What pretty play is

on to-night, that you keep behind the scenes?" Then, lowering his tones that he might not be heard by those who stood about, he asked with a chuckle :

"Did you bring her?"

The lieutenant nodded, biting his lip nervously.

"Good!" exclaimed the captain aloud. "Lieutenant, see that the gates are well guarded to-night; we have caught a rat. Now let's go in."

Felice, screened from observation, bent her head to catch every word. Nothing escaped her keen ears, not even the meaning beneath the spoken and whispered words. She pushed in with the company, pulling her hood well forward over her white face, and keeping as well concealed as possible. At first this was not difficult; for all eyes were on the distinguished company just arrived, and everyone was bent on paying suitable welcome to the commanding officer and his glittering *coterie*. The officers wore their side-arms and carried their chapeaus in their hands; their ladies, frizzled and powdered, were stiff in towering head-dresses and flowered satins, brocades and fine linen.

The girl noted the entrance of Skelton, who, instead of going to do his captain's bidding, came in with the crowd, his dark, sinister eyes following the course of his victim. There was that in his manner that said, "She cannot escape me. She may flutter and cry, but she has no means of escape save such as I have to offer—and on my terms. Sooner or later she will come to me. She is already beginning to attract attention. She will soon need Skelton, and then we shall see."

Thus thinking, he stationed himself near the door, and amused himself twisting his thin moustache and watching her.

Felice, throwing off her hood, moved about the room, speaking to none, nor noticing the curious glances of many; eagerly she looked into the faces of the men and listened to their voices. She must find him and tell him what she knew. She thought not of herself. She heard not the music, nor did her senses now reel with the movement of the dance. She slipped away from those who seemed to offer familiarity. Every moment she felt resting upon her the devilish gaze of her pursuer. She kept away from him as from contagion. Ever and anon she pressed her hand to her bosom, to feel hard against her trembling heart the cool courage of the touch of steel.

At last, conscious that this strange game of hide-and-seek by a maiden with dishevelled hair and white face was causing comment, and crazed with fear and anxiety, she ran with agonized face and threw herself almost into the arms of a young woman who stood somewhat apart from the dancers, partly concealed from the crowd by the decorations. She was conversing gayly with a tall, athletic man of dignified and graceful bearing, dressed plainly in the habit of a civilian, whose face, though serious, gave evidence that he was enjoying the little *tête-à-tête*. His collected look, well-set limbs, knitted muscles, and firm arch of breast gave evidence of virtue, intelligence, breeding, and good habits. His face was ashy pale, but hand-

some. There was a mingled firmness and gentleness in his eyes. His hair was brushed straight back from a high forehead, giving the face an appearance of candour and nobility. The frivolous lightness and the rude bravado, the former common to the Frenchman and the latter to the Englishman of the times, was wanting in him, and in its place shone forth a kind temper, a generous spirit, and a frank nature that were as rare in the eighteenth century as they were admirable.

The young woman was his match in symmetry of figure, tall and straight as a dart, with well-developed bust and shoulders and blooming cheeks. In manner and speech she was more vivacious. Her nature ran not so deep as his, but there was something in her large blue eyes, crowned by sweeping lashes, that revealed resources never used and depths never sounded. Her face was clear-cut and striking, her complexion blonde, with a wealth of sunny brown hair that was the despair of those who sought to confine it with pins and ribbons. Her glances were meteor-like and archly provoking, and her poise of head and body, admirably free and noble, indicated a disposition not to be trifled with.

The vision that burst upon the two who stood conversing was startling in its character and in the suddenness of its coming, and before they could utter a syllable or comprehend its meaning the girl was begging their protection with clasped hands uplifted before her face.

"Pardon, pardon! I crave your protection! Save me from that man!"

A convulsive shudder swept over her from head to foot. Her lips trembled, and her eyes were full of tears. The man instinctively stepped before the girl to shield her from observation.

"Whence comes your danger, mademoiselle? Who is your persecutor?" the man asked.

"Lieutenant Skelton," she replied, terrified at her own repetition of the name. "He stands near the door. Oh, do not look! He will kill me!"

"The wretch!" exclaimed the man, for already he had caught sight of the officer and noted his haughty scowl, curled lip, and aggressive demeanour.

"And who are you, pray?" asked the man's companion with a tone of real solicitude.

"I am Felice Constant, of Grosse Ile." She looked up wistfully.

The man started. The woman bent eagerly forward, at the same time darting a quick glance at her companion. Then she said:

"Felice Constant? Daughter of Pierre Constant, whom every loyal subject of the King distrusts and hates? How came you here?"

Her tone had a ring of severity in it. The girl's face was pitiful to look upon. She choked as she tried to speak.

"Oh, do not ask me. But tell me, good lady, is there one here—a stranger, one whom you have never seen before—who is strong and brave? You know

these people. Will you not aid me to find him I seek?"

"Yes, child; but there are many here who answer your description. Why this interest in one you do not know?"

"I must find him. He is in danger. They tell me he is here." She spoke as from a heart pierced with fear and anguish.

Robert Norvell stood as one transfixed. Before him stood the French girl of his dreams. It was her face and form and voice. There was the same cloud of dark hair framing a face of tropical beauty, and falling over well-rounded shoulders; the same lithe, pliant figure with its perfect lines and curves well displayed in a dress that clung to her figure; the same unstudied graces of a child of nature; the same soft, pleading eyes into which one, looking, expects to see visions of Paradise, and, expecting, is not disappointed; the same voice that moved the very fibres of the soul. In this one brief moment the girl's beauty sprang upon Norvell as a new and wonderful revelation. He was about to speak when the music stopped, and Captain Lernout approached, and with a courtly bow addressed Norvell's companion. He gave no attention to the others, presumably from their plebeian dress. "Good-evening, Mademoiselle Doris. It is not a dance till I have met the belle of Detroit; so I do myself the honour thus early in the evening."

Doris Cameron at this interesting moment was not to be flattered. The name of Felice Constant had been unpleasantly associated in her mind with that of her

hero since the meeting with Parks a few mornings before. She felt annoyed at the intrusion. Felice had stepped aside, and Norvell appeared to be earnestly talking to her. So she answered:

"You are saying that same thing, I venture, Captain Lernoult, to every Detroit and Sandwich lady. I pray you will not think it necessary to my happiness. Pray go and give your attention to our guests from across the river." Norvell and Felice had withdrawn a few paces. The captain stood between them and Doris.

"Come, now, you must believe me. I say again, it is not a dance without you. Everyone is loud in his admiration of you to-night, as ever. Come, I am commandant here, and your being a charming and saucy woman does not exempt you from military rule in time of war. You will dance with me; and you shall name the music."

Doris shot a quick glance over the captain's shoulder. Norvell and Felice had turned and were facing her. There was that in the man's face that brought the blood to her cheek. His pallor had gone, and his set lips were parted in a smile. She was angry. Without so much as a bow or a word to her late companions, she took the captain's arm, and together they found a place in the *cotillon*.

Skelton saw the whole manœuvre and guessed its meaning. Doris Cameron's partner was the spy. Felice Constant knew him too. He would bag them both to-night—but first he would make sure of the girl. To make a disturbance now was to spoil his game.

Felice and Norvell withdrew to the refreshment-booth, and the girl, over her shoulder, saw Skelton follow. She had briefly told Norvell her errand and given him warning. She now resolved to go farther—to lead him to safety. Her quick woman's wit came to her aid. She laid a hand on his arm. "Listen! There is no time to spare. That man is following us. He has planned to go with me and my woman, after the ball, to the west gate. He will let us out and then dismiss the guard. I am to take the key from him, and when the guard has departed I am to return and let myself in. He will be there waiting for me. As I enter I will pretend, as if by accident, to drop the key. He will, in the darkness, stoop to find it. You will be in hiding near by. You will spring to the gate, which will be open, and save yourself. My woman will await you at the Savoyard, and she will guide you to a place of safety."

"And you?" he asked, surprised at the boldness and cleverness of the plan conceived so quickly.

"I—had not thought," she answered, looking into his eyes in a bewildered way. Then quickly—

"You will take me with you!"

"Yes! Together or not at all," he answered, slowly and decisively, taking her hand between his own. "But if all should fail!" he continued, "if he should change his plan! If I should forget or miss the place or time! If, perchance, any one of a hundred things should happen—what then? You have endangered yourself for me. What is to become of you? Let me,

I pray you, dissuade you from this. My life is not worth the hazard of your dear self. Felice—I love you!” He would have taken her in his arms had he dared. As it was, his eyes looked volumes of tenderness.

“Oh, monsieur, it is no time to speak of such things. You ask me what if we fail. Then I have this.” Her eyes glistened as she drew from her bosom Marmjuda’s knife.

Norvell was startled by her terrible earnestness. “Promise me that it shall be as a last resort,” he pleaded.

“To save my honour,” she replied solemnly. Norvell’s lips shut tight and his face blanched. It was a situation whose seriousness he had not till now fully comprehended.

“Now let us go in,” she said. “You will leave me and go. Do not remain here longer.”

Overcome with the thought of all this girl was doing for him, and conscious of his love for her, he sought to retain her and pour out his heart to her.

“Felice, I have been living these days as in a dream, fearful that I would awaken to find there was nothing of reality in it, and that I had met a face I should never see again——”

“Hush!” she interrupted. “We are watched. Bring this ring to me to-night.” She had slipped from her finger the tiny band he had given her. Before he could answer out of the joy of his heart, she had changed the subject and they were re-entering the ballroom. They

found Captain Lernoult and Doris searching for them.

"Indeed," the captain was saying, "you must present me! They tell me she is divine—but surely not to compare with the fair Doris!"

"She has a face that haunts me," replied Doris, not seeming to notice the flattery. "It may be beautiful; it may not. But I cannot resist it. If men are half so strangely moved by it as I am, she is scarcely safe outside her island home."

"Egad! A compliment from a woman! You are generous to a rival."

"Yes, a rival, indeed, I fear," she whispered to herself with a sudden chill at her heart. "There they are," she exclaimed with a burst of earnestness. "Look! What think you of that face and figure?"

"Splendid! Magnificent! Such artless yet queenly ways," replied the captain in a transport, his ruddy face flushing a deeper red. "Your friend, the tall fellow, seems much taken with her. See how tenderly he looks into her eyes.

" 'C'est l'amour, l'amour,
Qui tourne le monde ronde.'

And where is Skelton? Has this country Apollo cut him out? Who is the man?"

Doris deigned no reply. She was busy with her thoughts. Her hitherto unchallenged leadership among the women of the village was suffering an attack from an unexpected quarter and found her off her

guard. This country girl—this little rebel French girl—had stolen her place, and, more than all, had succeeded in taking from her side the only man in all the world that had succeeded in interesting her; and how changed, she thought, was this girl since a few moments before—now so calm, so self-reliant, so radiant.

“Deck that girl in fine feathers, and she would turn the heads of the court of a Louis the Grand. As it is, in her simple habit, she fairly dazzles. Truly, anything becomes the beautiful,” went on the captain. Then they crossed the room directly in the path of Norvell and Felice. They met, and adroitly Doris introduced the captain and Felice, and, taking the arm of Norvell, moved away with him.

“Constant, of Grosse Ile?” the captain repeated, half aloud, and scarcely knowing why, excepting that for the first time in his life he felt a poverty of language.

“Yes, Captain Lernoult, I am the daughter and only child of Pierre Constant, a feeble old man whom your predecessor banished from Detroit for protesting against an act of injustice to himself. You have heard the story, have you not?”

“I have, but more have I heard of his charming daughter. Egad, I think I had better banish all the young women of Detroit to that lonely island. Its beauty must be contagious. Your very eyes mirror its flowery banks, and your lovely tresses smell of its leafy forests. You are superb, mademoiselle. One of my officers told me you were to be here, but I did not promise myself so great a treat. You were very brave

to come." His manner was patronising in the extreme.

"I trust I needed not be brave when I had your permission to come. Lieutenant Skelton wrote me that he had told you the story of our misfortunes, and that you were kindly disposed toward us, and that if I saw you to-night and told you of all that my poor father suffered in his exiled old age, and pleaded our poverty and our need, you would listen and do justice."

The captain was dumfounded. Skelton's trick lay exposed before him in all its baseness. He must make some answer.

"Yes—yes—of course. But that lieutenant of mine is an imaginative dog. I do not just remember our conversation. Let me see—it was over cards—a wager—or something. I did not think he meant it—that is, to bring you here—not that I did not want you, oh no; but I did not think you would come. You see we have not treated you very well—but here comes Skelton, and we 'll get at the facts. He will recall them." The captain's manner had grown stiff and his voice harsh. The tone of flattery had gone out of it. Skelton came up, smiling and still twisting his attenuated moustache.

"So, lieutenant, you made good your promise to bring to the ball the fairest of the fair? You are to be congratulated. Tell me the trick." There was something hard in the tone in which he spoke.

"There was no trick, I assure you, captain. Love laughs at locksmiths, and, I may add, at everything

else that stands in its way. I wanted the fair Felice to come, and she wanted to come, and there was nothing to hinder." He seemed much amused at his easy solution of the whole matter. The captain failed to join in his feeling of satisfaction. Felice trembled for the outcome.

"But this story," went on the captain, "about her father's wrongs and my inclination to right them? Has the young woman been telling you this?" he asked with forced merriment.

"Well, I simply said that when you saw her you would give her anything she asked; and you would, wouldn't you, captain? Come, now—I would, even to my hand and heart."

"And a precious donation it would be!" the captain muttered.

The colour had gone from the girl's face. The deception—the trick—was apparent. He had brought her there for his own amusement—to feed his vanity—to win a bet; and, having got her there, he would use her as the sport of his wantonness. That moment her heart was steeled to its purpose to play her own trick to the very end. Captain Lernoult, too, saw the game and measured its purpose far nearer than did the girl; and from the bottom of his soul, which, underneath a show of foolish gallantry, was true and honest, he pitied the girl and despised the man whom on more than one occasion he had caught in acts beneath a gentleman and a soldier.

"Mademoiselle, your hand for the next dance," said

the captain quietly, at the same time turning his back on Skelton and moving away to find a position on the floor.

Felice noted with alarm that Robert Norvell had not left the room, but that he hovered near her as if to protect her. She longed to go to him and urge him to fly, but she dared not. He remained to the end, when all joined in a wild, fantastic reel. Up and down the hall, boisterously gay, careened the long lines of dancers, swaying to the music and singing the tune in a wild harmony of voice. Once, again, and again, the hands of Norvell and Felice touched. It was to each a touch of soul to soul. His eyes were on her every movement. This meeting had increased the wonder and mystery he had woven about her. Danger was banished from his thought save as it involved the beautiful flower whose fragrant presence intoxicated his every sense. And not he only—half the men present were her suppliant slaves and performed marvellous feats of terpsichorean gallantry to win her favour. One other planned with superlative cunning to be always near her, and once he met her in the movement of the dance, and his face took on a smile of demoniac triumph when she whispered in his ear, as he held her hand for a moment, "I will go with you."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ball over, the tired musicians folded their music; the crowd at the door melted away; the men who served the wines and brandy went to sleep among their kegs; and, with laughter and song that floated far out over the river, the whole company repaired to the wharf and sang and shouted *adieux* to their Sandwich guests. Then the great torches that lit up the scene were extinguished, and two by two the tired, happy company made its way through the dark, narrow streets to their homes. There was much rough love-making on the way, not a little gossip, and here and there a wild song from some who, having drunk too deeply, were loath to turn the key on the night's frolic. In some, hearts beat faster over a triumph in the field of coquetry; in others, there was pique and ill-temper over real or fancied slights.

Two of the company, Robert Norvell and Doris Cameron, went directly from the ballroom to the home of the latter. There was a moment's pause at the entrance, then a brief good-night, and a hasty shutting of the door. It was evident that some one was out of humour. Norvell stood for a moment, as if loath to

leave thus, and then started for the home of Antoine Moreau.

When Doris Cameron closed the door behind her it was with no gentle hand. She was suffering the bitterness of her first defeat. She had seen her hero led captive by a nobody—a country girl—a minx—a designing woman.

“A pretty ruse it was,” she said, stamping her foot in her vexation, “to rush upon us, all pale and frightened, and carry him away, and then in a moment to hang on his arm as calm and sunny as a summer morning! The girl is a rebel, as is he. They have met before. She came here to see him. He knew she would be here. And this when I have done all for him, have renounced my people and my country, and—the shame of it!—have shown him my heart. He brings me home by the shortest way and says a hasty good-night, tells me he may never see me again, and thanks me and bids me remember him kindly, and kisses my hand and says he must go and that I may not know how nor when—it’s to her he goes, I know. Yes, to her! To think that I, Doris Cameron, should be shedding these tears! Oh, what have I done to suffer thus?”

It was indeed a bitter experience for a proud heart like that of Doris Cameron’s, to have laid itself on the altar and found the sacrifice unacceptable; to have poured out its long-accumulated richness like the alabaster box of ointment upon the object of its love and found the gift in vain; to have barred the ap-

proaches to her heart portals against all the world, and then to have flung them wide open to one who had disdained to enter. In her anguish she threw herself upon her bed and lay sleepless through the night, hoping, fearing, praying, with ever before her eyes the hateful vision of a beautiful face coming between her own and his.

Norvell, on entering the Moreau cabin, quickly collected his few possessions, informed Madame Moreau of his departure, thanked her for her kindness to him, bade her exercise a motherly care over Doris Cameron, exhorted her to keep up the search for his sister, promised that when in a few months at most the army of patriots should enter Detroit she should have her reward, and then quickly left the cabin and by an un-frequented way made haste to reach the west gate.

Felice had promised that she would delay reaching the gate as long as possible, to enable him to arrive there ahead of her. This was made easy through her suggestion to Skelton that they go with the crowd to bid adieu to the company that took the boats for Sandwich.

For some minutes after finding a place of concealment from the sentinel Norvell heard nothing. A half-hour passed, and he began to fear the plan had miscarried; then he heard footsteps approaching, followed by the low murmur of a voice. Two figures, a man and a woman, followed by a third who could scarcely be heard for her moccasined step, passed almost within his reach. The man was talking; his

tone was exultant. The woman was silent. As the two neared the gate, the man called twice to the sentinel; the slowness of the response showed the latter had been sleeping at his post. Norvell heard a shuffle, the rattle of a musket, and knew that the fellow was making a show of doing his duty.

"Asleep, eh?" said the voice of Lieutenant Skelton sharply. "You'll get a taste of the guardhouse for this. Clark and the whole rebel army might enter here without your being any the wiser. Give me the key."

A moment later Norvell heard a key turn in the lock. He crept forward along the line of the pickets to within a dozen steps of Skelton. He was unarmed save for a knife, which was in his belt. He leaned forward, every muscle tense, like a hound in leash. He heard a few hurried words and light laughter on the part of the man, then the gate opened and shut. For a moment there was silence. His heart beat like a trip-hammer.

"What's your name?" asked Skelton gruffly of the sentry. The latter mumbled a response.

"Very well; give me that gun, and you go to bed. I'll stand guard here, or find some one who can without sleeping. Report to me in the morning."

The man shuffled off into the darkness, and Skelton stood alone.

Scarcely had the footfalls of the retreating soldier died away ere Norvell heard the key turning in the lock. She had returned! He crept forward a few feet,

now on hands and knees. The door was opening. He was nearly on them.

"My dearest!" he heard Skelton say in a passionate whisper; then a smothered cry arose as of some one struggling in an embrace.

"The key—I've dropped it!"

It was Felice's voice, loud and distinct. It was the signal! Skelton stooped to feel for it. Like a lion with every nerve and sinew stretched to their utmost, Norvell sprang forward and with a terrific blow sent Skelton sprawling upon the ground a dozen paces away.

The gate was open. Felice sprang through it crying, "Come! Come! To the boat!" Norvell followed. The key had remained in the gate, and one turn made it fast. Then together they rushed by the path to the bank of the Savoyard.

"Marmjuda! Marmjuda! We are coming," cried the girl. "Father! Father! I'm coming home."

Norvell scarcely could keep pace with the flying figure at his side. He caught her hand; it was hot and trembling.

"Felice, dearest, stay; there is no need to hasten. We shall be far away ere this is known. That man will be slow to make known what happened to him."

"No, no, we must go away from this awful place. We must go—you and I——"

The sentence was cut short. Norvell put one arm about her. The strain had proved too much. She would have fallen had he not borne her along in his strong arms. And thus they reached the bank.

The boat was in readiness, and Marmjuda, paddle in hand, stood ready to shove off. Norvell lifted his burden as if it had been a feather, and, stepping into the canoe, made a seat for her in the bottom of the boat, with her head resting on his knees.

"You are safe?" she asked dreamily.

"Yes, dear one." A sudden rapture thrilled him through and through.

"I prayed I might see you again," she went on. "God is very good to me!"

"And to me!" he said reverently.

Marmjuda had loosed the boat from its moorings, and by a few vigorous strokes had sent it into the sluggish current of the little river. Norvell dipped a hand in its cool depths and passed it lightly over the girl's forehead. In a few moments they reached the strong current of the greater river, and their progress was swifter. Marmjuda sat in the stern of the boat, parting the water with long sweeps of her paddle and peering ahead to avoid the rocks and marshy headlands.

A light vapour covered the surface of the water, through which, like a curtain of lace, could be seen the faint streaks of the morning sun shooting up from the tops of the forests that lined the eastern bank. Soon a ruddy light overspread the sky, and the fog began to lift and roll away on the wings of a gentle south breeze that blew from off the not far distant lake. Flocks of geese rose from the water, flapped their wings, and flew honking away. Fish leaped over the surface of the

limpid water, catching at insects that hovered near, or sporting in very wantonness.

Felice, warmed by her lover's touch, and comforted by his tender, reassuring words, fell asleep; one arm, folded under her head, rested upon his knee. Her face, half hidden in meshes of dark hair, which floated across her shoulders to the stream, was half turned to his. Her free arm hung loosely over the side of the canoe, the finger-tips just touching the water. Gazing upon her, all Norvell's faculties were absorbed in admiration.

The sun was just showing over the tree-tops, spreading a golden pathway across the water, and darting its rays full in her face, when, with a deep breath, much like a sigh, she opened her eyes and looked bewilderingly up into his face; it was so close to hers that his hair fell upon her cheek. She heard the quiver of his breath, and a faint blush stole over her face and spread to her neck. He leaned a little forward to her, drinking in her beauty with all his eyes. Then bending lower, he brushed intruding curls aside and kissed her full on her warm, willing lips. They had tasted their first kiss of love, and a delicious shudder went through the girl's frame. Then he drew forth the ring she had bade him bring back to her, and, taking one of her hands in his, he put it on her finger. She raised her eyes and looked timidly into his as he said slowly and gently—

“My heart loves thee, dearest, and this is its pledge. Wear it for ever.”

His voice was low and infinitely tender. He drew her up close within his arms, while the crimson current deepened on her cheek, and tears of joy suffused her eyes, in which shone a whole heaven of love and timid devotion. She had never known companionship like this. Oh, that it might last for ever! Few words were spoken. At times like these words may be dispensed with. Thoughts flow without expression. They speak through ardent eyes. Was this love? If so, love was peace, love was heart-bursting joy, love was boundless, throbbing life. She made no effort to draw away. It was heaven for each, to feel the pulsing life of the other. There was on her hair and brow the aroma of kisses stolen through the night, when she lay there half unconscious—kisses that filled her dreams with beauty. She longed to cling for ever to this strong man as the vine to the tree.

The dim outlines of Grosse Ile now rose before them. A startled look came into the girl's eyes. The picture of the familiar shore-line called to mind other realities than that of the love of this strong, true man. Thoughts of the uncertain future crowded upon her, and with a look of mute inquiry she looked up into her lover's face. In the supreme joy of awakening to find herself safe and secure in the pure love of this man, she had up to this moment forgotten all else. Her dream had been to rescue him; this she had accomplished: now it was to keep him, never to leave his side, ever to share his dangers. He read her thoughts easily, for they were counterparts of his own. He

spoke to her cautiously of the future, hinting at an immediate departure and a speedy return.

"No, no; do not speak to me of going away! My father will plan a way for you. He is wise and good. He sent me to save you, and he will find a way to protect you. He is waiting for us. See! The smoke is curling from the chimney. He expects us."

Norvell could deny her nothing. He would see Pierre Constant; but nothing surer seemed for the future than that he must finish his mission, report the issue of his adventure to his commander, and await the fortunes of war to speed the day of their reunion. His heart was heavy with its burden of love and apprehension, as the boat, under the skilful hand of Marmjuda, came to land, and he helped his fair companion ashore.

"Grosse Ile is beautiful," he said, as together they climbed the mossy bank.

"It is my home, and home must always be beautiful," she said tenderly.

"And where your home is, there needs be no other charm," he returned ardently.

They were nearing the cottage. No sign of life appeared from within, save the light wreaths of smoke that circled from the chimney. A pair of squirrels played fearlessly about the door, and a score of birds flew in circles over their heads, while a young doe bounded from under the neighbouring trees and stood gazing at them with large, pleading eyes.

"They seem glad to see you," said Norvell, noting with surprise the freedom from fear which the animals displayed.

"Yes, they are all my friends. They have come for their breakfast. All through the year these little friends of mine come to see me every day and keep me company. They eat from my hand. They talk to me in their own sweet way. I love them, and they love me."

"Happy creatures!" he exclaimed, enraptured by her voice.

"They seem afraid of you; I do not know why," she said, as the squirrels scampered away.

"Because I am not like you, dear," he answered. He was thinking what a beautiful creature she was as she stood before him in all her naturalness of manner and dress. Here were the jewels of inestimable value—purity and simplicity, and that tenderness peculiar to the sex that is so pleasing to normal men. There came over him at this moment a great longing to live—to live that he might possess, care for, cherish, love this girl as man never loved and cherished before.

They had reached the cottage. Marmjuda had preceded them, and, entering the cabin, had left open the door. Trembling with anticipated joy, the girl took her lover by the hand and entered. The old man sat before a fire that was smouldering on the hearth. He had evidently sat there long. He was asleep, and even the entrance of the Indian woman did not awaken him. Felice led her companion stealthily to a position just back of her father's chair, and, leaving him standing there, she slipped around and dropped on her knees at the old man's side.

"Father," she said softly, "I have come back. You are glad to see me?"

Pierre Constant slowly opened his eyes and turned a troubled face upon his daughter. Slowly, tremblingly, he reached out a wasted hand.

"You told him?—You warned him?—Robert Norvell?"—he inquired, a strangely anxious light in his eye.

"Yes, father," Felice began, "and he——"

"I thank God! I dreamed he was dead—that you too were dead. I saw it all as I sat here. You were together—you and he. You had escaped, and they followed you here. I shut the door upon you. They murdered you both just outside the door, and I—laughed—I—laughed. Then they dragged your dead bodies away and I was alone. My heart beat cold and hard. I could not hear the voices of the birds, or see the colours of the flowers, or smell the odours of the fields and river. I was as one dead, walking amid the living. It was an old man's dream, my daughter,—an old man's dream. Are you sure you warned him—this Robert Norvell?"

Pierre Constant's question was that of one in mortal terror. It frightened the girl.

"Yes, yes, father! I did as you told me—he is safe—and—see—he is here."

She held out her hand to Norvell, and, taking it, the latter stepped around in front of the old man, Felice's face taking on a look of radiant joy as she anticipated her father's surprise and pleasure.

The old man's eyes stealthily measured the tall form before him from the ground up, a deathly pallor spreading over his face, and then the eyes of the two men met—but for an instant. The old man's head fell upon his breast. Norvell dropped the hand of Felice, stepped back a pace, and passed his hand across his brow as if to gather his wits; his face paled, and beads of sweat stood on his forehead; then suddenly he bent forward in an attitude of defiance, and, shooting one strong arm out at full length, he pointed a finger in the face of Pierre Constant and cried in a voice that trembled with emotion:

“Michel Deshon! Coward! Murderer!”

His voice pierced like a sword's thrust, his eyes shot fire, and his whole body quivered with the intensity of his emotion.

“No, no, not Deshon,” the old man moaned pitifully, his whole aspect showing the most abject fear.

“You lie, Michel Deshon! You cannot hide that face from me. Look up and see the son of the man you killed. That face is stamped here, and here, and here.” He struck his forehead, eyes, and heart. “Ten thousand denials from living lips cannot tear out the picture of your face as I saw it when but a boy. You killed my father. You drove me, a mere boy, into the wilderness, without a home and a father's care. You robbed me of a sister—and now that I have these twenty years longed to find you and laugh into your ears that devilish laugh you uttered when my father fell on your doorstep, you say it is not Michel Deshon

—ha, ha!—it is Pierre Constant!—ha, ha! It is my time now to laugh. Join me if you can, good Pierre Constant—laugh, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!”

The cabin rang with the hard, unearthly echoes of a madman’s voice. Pierre Constant drooped lower and lower in his chair. His body seemed to shrivel into nothingness. His dark, skinny hands tried to cover his eyes. He moaned like one suffering the torments of the damned. The laughter of the man before him found an echo in every chamber of his soul; the demons of memory had awakened to add their horrible voices to the condemnation.

Felice Constant stood for a moment as if turned to stone, her form rigid, and her eyes and ears intent; then, springing like a tiger between the two men, she stood shielding the one and facing the other.

“Felice!” cried the angry Norvell, every vein in him quivering, “come away. This is no place for you.”

“Speak not that name again,” she answered defiantly, her body drawn to its full height. “I am not Felice to you. It is you that are a coward. You insult an old man and a defenceless girl. This man gave his only daughter to save a soldier—not you. That daughter gladly accepted insult and humiliation, and would have welcomed death if by her act she could have done aught for him; but it was not for you she did it. It was for the cause. I do not know you. Go! Leave us, or you will know that Felice Constant can defend her father’s honour.”

She stepped back quickly and grasped one of her

father's wasted hands in one of hers; with the other she pointed fixedly to the door.

Norvell hesitated, a flood of conflicting emotions surging through his heart. He longed to cry out to her to fly with him and leave this miserable old man to his wretched fate. For the moment he could not conceive of her being this man's daughter; it flashed across him that by some trick she was in the old man's power. He turned an appealing look upon her, but her eyes rebuked and repelled him. They seemed to gaze on space.

"Felice!" he cried, extending his arms.

She moved not a muscle; her face was white and hard as adamant. No other course was open, and, bowing low, the man hurried from the room.

CHAPTER XIX

AS the door closed behind the retreating figure of Robert Norvell, a cold, vague terror took possession of the young French girl; then, as the room seemed to fill with ghostly shapes, she sank down with a wild, bitter cry at her father's feet and buried her face in her hands. How long she lay there she knew not; but, awakened to a realisation of her position by the touch of Marmjuda's hand, she arose, parted the locks from her wet cheeks, and set about ministering to her father's needs. The old man had sunk into a sort of stupor, both arms hanging lifeless at his side, his head bowed, and every muscle of his body relaxed.

All through the day Pierre Constant sat thus in his great chair, murmuring at times incoherent words, and refusing with a feeble gesture of annoyance the kind offices of his daughter, who, though worn with sleepless hours of anxiety, kept her vigil by his side with unceasing devotion. Skilfully she directed her speech so as to draw his mind from himself. Often she stroked his hand and hair, kissed his brow, and assured him that all was well, but with no effect.

The event of the morning was an awful enigma to

her, and whenever she set her mind to solve it her bewilderment and misery increased. Her father a murderer? It could not be. It was only the wild ravings of a man crazed by days and weeks of fear and anxiety. But why her father's abject terror? Why his white face and trembling limbs? Why these hours of silence? Why his repulse of her every effort to help him? No, no! She could not bear the thought. This gentle, unoffending father, who had always been so good, so kind, so merciful, so tender to every living thing, was surely innocent of the awful charge! But this Michel Deshon! Who was he? "Deshon!"—that name floated in her memory like a mirage before the eyes; but when she sought to find it, it eluded her grasp. She longed to ask her father what it all meant, but she dared not. Several times she turned suddenly toward him and found his eyes following her furtively from between half-closed lids; then she hurried to his side with an exclamation of joy at being recognised, but his eyes closed and he appeared again to be asleep.

At last, crushed by the weight of her grief and the mystery of it all, and fearful that a condition worse than death had come upon him, she quietly left the house, bidding Marmjuda call her if her father wakened or spoke her name. Once outside, she fled for consolation to her little shrine among the vines under the big tree, and there she knelt and poured out her breaking heart in agonising prayer that they two—father and daughter—might be kept from impending

woe and strengthened for the trials that gathered about them. Passionately she covered the crucifix with kisses, and peered upward through the leaves at the dull blue sky overhead, in a mute, unexpressed appeal that out of its unknown depths might come forgiveness for all—yes, even for Robert Norvell.

Wearied, she threw herself upon the floor of green turf and slept—how long she knew not, save that when she arose and parted the vines that formed the door to her retreat the shadows of the forest had spread over the cabin, and the quiet of evening was on the water. She walked down the path to the river, and, stopping at its brink, bathed her face and neck in the cool, clear current, and with a quiet calm of spirit, refreshing and strengthening as the cool stillness that succeeds a sudden storm in summer, she returned to her father's side.

Her disappointment was great when she found him still apparently sleeping, his breathing for the most part gentle as an infant's, but at times broken by a deep-drawn sigh. A sudden thought entered the girl's mind. Tiptoeing across the floor, she stopped for a moment before the chest that contained her mother's clothes; then, dropping upon her knees, she opened the lid. Smiling in anticipation, she drew forth the garments one by one. She did not, as was her custom, now stop to admire and caress them. Marmjuda was busy outside, and she and her father were alone. She would put on her mother's clothes—the beautiful bridal dress—and in these she would woo the dear

father back to himself and to her. Half frightened, she carried the dainty finery to her bed and drew its curtains. Deftly and quietly she removed her simple frock and bared her feet; then, with eager, trembling hands, she drew on the dainty garments. Half-conscious of her own loveliness, a playful mood took possession of her, and, thrusting the curtain aside, she tripped with a laugh to her father's chair and stood before him.

"Father!" she called in an excited whisper.

The old man opened his eyes in a startled way. One hand rose falteringly to his brow, the other was stretched out to her.

"Marie!" he exclaimed feebly. The wife of his young manhood stood before him in all her beauty, just as he had first seen and won her.

"Marie! My little Marie! They told me you were gone, and that I could see you no more. Come near, that I may touch you. Tell me——" (a sudden, strange light came into his eyes) "tell me—is Robert Norvell here?"

"No, dear, he has gone," answered Felice, her heart beating quick with anxiety.

"Marie, bring him back; I would see him again."

"But he has gone—gone for ever." The sentence ended in a half sob. The last words almost fought for utterance.

"Marie! Marie!" The man's hands were groping blindly. His eyes glowed with unnatural fire. "Search for him, Marie, dearest. Bring him here, that I may

tell him Michel Deshon has made his peace with God; that Robert Norvell may forgive as God has forgiven. Go, Marie, go—quick!”

A vague suspicion of the terrible truth burst upon the girl, and her bosom heaved with the tide of anguish that threatened to overwhelm her in its flood. Distractedly she turned away.

Marmjuda entered and began the preparation for the evening's simple repast. Felice opened the door, and, drawing her father's chair so that he might catch the gentle breeze that blew from across the water, she herself sat down in the doorway, resting her head against the doorpost, and watched the evening fade away. The river was indistinct in the gathering dusk. The air was warm and still, save for a damp and fitful breeze that came over the water. The setting sun had tipped with light a line of low-lying clouds on the eastern horizon, out of which, at intervals, came the low murmur of distant thunder. The outlines of the great trees that stood before the cabin mingled with the growing darkness, and the frogs that made their homes in the marshy reaches up and down the margin of the river now seemed the only living things.

In strange discord with nature in this peaceful mood was the heart of Felice Constant. She had learned that a great sin had lain upon the soul of the man whom she had worshipped as more than father; that he had carried its burden for years alone; that it had tortured him night and day even in the quiet of their exile home. She now recalled strange happenings,

and vague, uneasy fancies that had come to trouble and mystify her in bygone days, and in some way these all unravelled before her eyes to-night. The letters "M. D." on her mother's locket—Marie Deshon—were no longer an unexplained mystery to her; the name in her mother's Bible had been a source of unsatisfied questioning with her, the more so as her father met her queries with abrupt, impatient word or gesture—and yet that name remained.

Gradually there came into her mind the realisation that a great gulf had opened between herself and Robert Norvell—one that she could never bridge. She had driven him away and bade him never return. And why should she wish to see him again? Had he not mocked and cursed her father? Had he not broken every law of hospitality, and trampled her under his feet as a thing to be despised? Then she recalled the days since they met, beginning with the night on the edge of the woods. Suddenly her heart leaped into her throat. Had he not said that night that he sought the murderer of his father—that he would not rest till he found him and heard him on his knees plead for pardon as he had heard his father plead? Yes, she had solved the mystery of it all. And now Michel Deshon was praying to be forgiven, and she had sent away for ever him who alone could give peace to the troubled soul.

She arose from her seat in a fever of uncertainty as to what to do. Suddenly there was a stirring in the bushes at the brow of the river bank—sounds not un-

usual in this place. Many kinds of game, large and small, abounded in the near-by woods. Perhaps a deer had tangled itself in the underbrush, or a fox was creeping along the bank. But an explanation which at any other time would have seemed reasonable now utterly failed to quiet her. Her nerves were shaken. She felt that some added danger was near. She listened intently for a moment, then quickly entered the cabin and shut the door. Hardly had the bolt slid into place when her heart stood still. The barking of a fox! A moment later a faint answer came from the direction of the forest. Even this, under ordinary circumstances, would not have disturbed her, but to-night it portended evil. She turned toward Marmjuda, and the Indian woman was listening, too, with an unwonted look of fear on her face.

"Indians!" exclaimed Felice quietly, so as not to waken her father. The Indian woman nodded assent.

"From the fort," she said to herself; and then, true to the instincts of a frontier woman, she took from its resting-place her father's musket, examined it critically, and with the coolness of a veteran stood it near the door and by its side placed powder and shot. From a peg over the fireplace she took a hunting-knife and placed it within reach. With the help of Marmjuda she placed her father's chair in the chimney corner. Then she turned to change the pretty garments she had taken from the chest for her own. A violent knocking at the door, as with the butt of a gun or a heavy stone, stopped her ere she had taken a step. The girl made

no answer. Her father heard it, and, looking up with a shrinking, hunted look on his face, muttered:

"It is he!"

Felice guessed that her father meant Robert Norvell, and that the old fear was again coming upon him.

"Then he may not enter, father," she said firmly and reassuringly.

The knock was repeated, this time louder.

"It is Robert Norvell!" exclaimed the old man tremblingly.

Felice raised her voice: "There is no place here for those who make war on an aged man and defenseless women."

Again blows rained on the door, accompanied by a demand and an oath.

"Who's there?" the girl called, placing the knife in her bosom, which in her low bodice shone white and bare.

"An officer of the King's army, and I command you in the King's name to open the door!"

Felice answered quickly:

"Pierre Constant knows no king and refuses to obey. Whom do you seek, that you thus molest a peaceful household?"

"We want Robert Norvell, and for that matter we shall not count it a loss to find a young rebel, Mademoiselle Constant. Come, open the door, and save us the trouble of breaking it open."

"Robert Norvell is not here. We know not and care not where he is. As for Mademoiselle Constant,

she is here; and here she will remain till you come and take her out; and remember, you who do come, she is armed and can shoot."

An oath and a sharp word of command were followed by a blood-curdling yell that came from the river and the woods on every side, and drove the occupants of the cabin, terror-stricken, into one another's arms.

Marmjuda was the first to recover, and, creeping to the door, she seized the rifle and betook herself to the loophole in the wall, into which she thrust the gun-barrel.

"Fire not till I say," spoke Pierre in words of command, struggling in vain to gain his feet, his swarthy face taking on a look of desperate courage, his eyes sparkling with unwonted brilliancy. "We will show these brutes who hire savages to kill women what stuff a Frenchman is made of. Stand here by my side, my daughter. Take the knife. Remember it must be death for Pierre Constant, and not capture."

"And for Felice, too, father!" said the girl firmly.

One volley of shot had poured into the heavy wood-work of the cabin with no effect, and then another, which shattered the tiny panes in the one little window and brought down a shower of glass upon those within. A few bullets found entrance through the loose plaster between the logs, and buried their spent force in the opposite wall. And yet Pierre gave no orders to the Indian woman, who stood crouching at her post. The yells of the savages seemed to grow less and less frequent, till suddenly they ceased altogether and an

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ominous silence followed. Felice was keeping guard over her father in the far corner of the dark room.

"They have gone, father," said Felice in a whisper.

"'Tis but a lull in the storm. They will return," he replied.

Marmjuda suddenly left her post. In the darkness the others could hear only her moccasined feet gliding toward the door. There she seemed to stop, as if she heard a voice. Now Felice, too, heard it—subdued, pleading. She crept to Marmjuda's side. The Indian bent her ear to the floor.

"He call—he call Felice—he there—he want in."

The woman grasped the skirt of her mistress, and the latter got down upon her knees close up to the door.

"Felice!"

It was her name, called faintly, but plainly now, as by some one crouching close to the earth and near the doorstep.

"Who is it?" she asked, scarcely daring to trust her voice.

"It is I—one who loves you better than life and would die with you."

She knew the name, but a strange force pushed her on to ask—

"Who is it—his name?"

"Robert Norvell. Open the door, for God's sake—quick, that I may help you!"

"What is it, my daughter? To whom are you speaking?" asked the old man.

"It is nothing, father. Marmjuda was mistaken."

"To whom were you talking? Speak, child!" The voice was now stern.

"To no one, father. It was but a fancy."

"Felice!" came the call again, and there went out no answer. The girl was feeling her way back to her father's side.

Again the air was rent with terrible cries, and a fusillade of shot poured upon the devoted cabin, sending pieces of mortar flying about the room, but doing no further damage. The occupants of the cabin could hear the voice of command from those directing the onslaught. Felice thought once she recognised that of Lieutenant Skelton. Another scattering volley and another followed, and then the cries of the savages showed that their tempers were fast reaching a pitch of frenzy. Suddenly through the small window high up in the wall Felice saw the reflection of firelight, and her heart gave a leap of horror. She threw herself about her father's neck.

"*Mon Dieu!* They have set fire to the cabin!"

"God have mercy on us!" cried the old man. At the same time a tremendous blow struck the door, followed by a shot, a yell of agony, and the sound of some one falling. After a few moments' silence a strong voice from without called:

"Monsieur Constant! A truce! Open your door and say that you have not Robert Norvell, the spy, within, and we will leave you unharmed. I give you the word of an English officer. What say you?"

"Do you hear that, father?" cried Felice.

"Yes, my child, I hear."

"It may save your life. Quick! What shall I say?"

"I will go. Your hand, my daughter."

For the first time in many months Pierre Constant rose and stood upon his feet. Supported by his daughter he moved to the door. At a word Marmjuda drew the bolt and swung it open. The savages had disappeared as if by magic. The flames, which had now gathered some headway, cast a lurid glow over the trees and bushes, from behind which peered unseen a score or more of hideous faces. Two men, one dressed as an officer in the King's army, and the other in slouchy, boatman attire, approached the door.

Pierre Constant and his daughter stood on the threshold, the old man steadying his tottering form on his daughter's arm, while at their feet, stretched full length in the path, lay an Indian in the throes of death.

The two men stopped at a distance of twenty paces. Felice instantly recognised them both; her father in the uncertain light could not. The old man was the first to speak. His native courtesy was manifest even here.

"Whom have I the honour to address?" he asked with dignity.

"It is Lieutenant Skelton of His Majesty's troops at Fort Detroit, and your friend and neighbour, Jacques Guion," returned the officer, not to be outdone in politeness. Then he continued: "You are too brave a man to die like a rat in a trap, Monsieur Constant,

and pretty girls are too scarce in America and particularly in these parts—excuse me!” he said, bowing low, as he noted the haughty scorn of the girl who stood before him, her beauty enhanced by her dress and the warm glow of the reflected light, “too scarce, I say, to give warrant for these red devils cutting her pretty hair, mischief-maker and rebel as she is. I have you in my power; but these and other reasons induce me to make you this proposition—a fair one considering that you are caught red-handed, spying out an English fort and giving aid to its enemies. You deserve death. But listen——”

“You gave me your word as an English officer, sir,” interrupted the old man, “that if one Robert Norvell were not in our cabin we should go unharmed. I have taken you at your word. Were Robert Norvell here, as he is not, this door should not swing on its hinges to save us at the cost of his life; but he is not here, and I ask that you redeem your promise. I ask nothing further.”

“True, monsieur, such was my offer; but the stubborn disloyalty you have just uttered must cost you something, or I could not be doing my duty in the premises. Again, it was only by such means I was enabled to drive the game from cover and look again upon your adorable daughter, whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting since last night, when our plans were so rudely interrupted.

“Your terms, sir,” said Pierre Constant coldly.

“My terms are these; and they are the only ones I

can offer. First, you will prove to me that Robert Norvell is not in hiding in your house, and that you know not where he is; and second, you little rebel at your side will become the wife of this fine fellow here, who, by his service to the King and his love for the girl, deserves the prize, and by God shall have it. On these terms I will save your life and your property. Otherwise I will turn these hellhounds loose, and the fire will do the rest. What say you?"

No martyr ever stood in the presence of death more serene and self-contained than did Pierre Constant. His limbs straightened and his form towered to its full height. His head, with its long white hair falling upon his shoulders, lifted proudly. His face, sallow and seamed, expressed stern, inflexible decision. His voice was without a tremor. In this supreme moment Felice was her father's daughter, with all his pride of birth, staunchness of principle, loyalty of heart. Her face, looking far away above the tree-tops, took on a sweetness and purity of expression that to men of finer mould than those before her would have seemed angelic. She was praying.

Pierre Constant heard the cruel terms. His answer was prompt.

"Sir, I hear your offer. You would have me buy my life at the price of my daughter. The price is far too great. There is little of life left to me. It is a mere breath. If it were a pinch of snuff you ask me to pay, or a broken feather, I might give it; but my daughter—no, no; it can never be. Her life is a forfeit, too, you

say. She is young. Life is sweet to such as she. Let her speak. What say you, Felice, my daughter?"

Folding her hands before her breast, she took a step forward. Then in a voice that those who heard it never forgot, she said:

"You have asked me to choose death or dishonour. What, as men, think you should be my choice? Have you mothers? Have you sisters? What answer would you make for them? Am I less a woman because a defenseless one? Because no arm can strike for me, must I forget the pure mother who bore me, and the teachings of my father? Must I betray all that is good in me and kill my heart and conscience? And all this that I may gain a few years of miserable life? But you make the decision hard for me. I have prayed God to help me. Were the choice for myself alone, it were easy; but I am choosing for him whom I love above myself, him who has been father, mother, brother, sister, priest, and teacher to me, for whom I would gladly bare this breast to yon savages and bid them strike. But listen, Lieutenant Skelton; I bid you, monsieur, go back to London, as you and all yours will go beaten by the armies of a just cause, and tell your sweethearts there that in the forests of the New World you found a woman who held her honour too dear for purchase at any price. That woman is base who weds for gain—even though it be a gain of life. It is better to die than to live ill. That is Felice Constant's answer."

Hand in hand the two, father and daughter, stood

for a brief moment. Slightly turning, they started to withdraw, when the sharp crack of a rifle rang out, a puff of smoke arose from a clump of bushes near the corner of the cabin, and Pierre Constant, tottering, fell back into the arms of Marmjuda. At the same moment an Indian bounded from behind the bush whence the smoke had risen. Scarcely had he reached the threshold when another shot broke the stillness, and he fell head foremost across the step, while over his prostrate body leaped a figure which, pushing its way in at the door, slammed it shut, slid the bolt, and in a moment was kneeling anxiously over the prostrate form of Pierre Constant. So quick was the movement that the besiegers were powerless to prevent it. Their rage was now boundless and voiced itself in blood-curdling yells and a storm of bullets. At the same time the fire was eating its way between the logs and filling the cabin with smoke and a lurid glare.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! My father is killed!" cried Felice as she threw herself beside her father in an agony of fear.

Absorbed for a moment in her grief, she did not notice the man who had entered, and who now, with the greatest equanimity, was directing Marmjuda to fetch brandy and water and towels, and was himself loosening the old man's shirt, that he might find the wound and stop the flow of blood. Then their eyes met.

"You have come back," she cried, "to see my father die! You are here again to laugh—to point the finger at him—to call that terrible name again. You have

killed him. Were it not for you, all this had not happened. And you come to glory in it all! Will you not give us these last moments without the curse of your presence?"

"Speak not so, Felice!" he said, looking unutterable love and pity into her eyes. "I have come to ask forgiveness of Pierre Constant and then to die with him. Grant me this privilege. The time is short. His life is ebbing fast, and the smoke is suffocating. Let me speak to him."

There was no power in her to withstand his intense appealing voice and look.

She made no reply.

"Pierre Constant!" called Norvell slowly and distinctly, leaning close over the pallid face.

"Pierre Constant!" echoed the old man feebly, directing a glassy stare into the face that bent over him.

"Pardon, monsieur, pardon the act and words of a wretched man. I knew not what I did and said. I was a fool, a coward. All day I have lingered about the cabin, to see you again, to tell you this. I knew they would come to search for me here. I could not go and leave you at their mercy. I am here to die with you. Pardon, pardon! In the name of God, speak the word, monsieur!"

The last words of the man were uttered with difficulty. The smoke that was now rolling in dense volume into the room choked his utterance. Tongues of flame had found their way between the logs and lit up the interior of the cabin. The cries of the savages

sounded like the yelps of hungry wolves close upon their prey. The heavy door of the cabin was with difficulty withstanding the impact of some heavy object in the hands of determined men.

For a moment it seemed that Pierre Constant had spoken his last word.

“Look not at me so! Speak, Pierre Constant! For the love of God, do not let me die unforgiven!”

“Listen!” whispered Felice quietly, as her keen eyes caught a slight movement of the thin lips. “Bend low, he speaks!”

“Air—air!” the dying man gasped, at the same time catching at his throat as if choking.

Felice looked helplessly at Norvell. The latter seemed puzzled for a moment, then sprang to his feet. Through the now blinding smoke he flew to the door, slipped the bolt, and flung it wide open. Before the howling mob without could move he had returned, and, lifting the dying man, had borne him a few steps toward the threshold and laid him down. The savages with a shout of defiance poured upon them, but just within the door they stopped. Their leader had forced himself forward, and, standing before them, made a barrier against their further advance. Just behind Skelton was Jacques Guion with a frightened leer on his dark face. They saw an old man dying—heard him speaking slowly and in broken whispers; saw a wrinkled old squaw in the background sitting cross-legged on the floor, rocking her body to and fro, and chanting a weird song; saw a man and a woman,

seemingly oblivious to impending peril to themselves, bending to catch the dying man's words. Skelton confessed to himself afterward that had his life depended on it he could not for the time being have taken another step forward.

The old man's eyes sought those of Norvell.

"Robert Norvell—it is Michel Deshon who speaks—protect my Felice—the stars are going out—it is dark—draw nearer. Felice, my child, adieu!—I am dying!"

"No, no, *mon père!* One word, one other word! Quick, monsieur," cried the girl, addressing Norvell, "some brandy! He must not die yet!" There was something in the girl's manner that spoke a desperate purpose to solve a mystery. A few drops of liquid were forced between the set lips.

"Father!" cried the girl in an agony of suspense, "are you not my father, then?"

"Felice, my daughter!" came the answer, scarcely breathed.

Felice buried her face in her hands.

"Where is he?" asked the dying man suddenly.

"Is it Robert Norvell you ask for, father?"

"Yes!"

"I am here—here to pray your pardon, Monsieur—Constant!"

"I forgive all as I hope to be forgiven, as night and day I have prayed the Holy Christ. Your name is written on my soul. You ask pardon of me. I ask it of you, Robert Norvell. I killed your father—I drove you away—I robbed you of a sister—I—Michel

Deshon! I tried to hide my guilt—I fasted—I prayed—I went long journeys in the forest—I changed my name as the good God had changed my heart—so that I might forget it all and live a new life. You have come—his son—to forgive me—*Dieu merci!*”

“Yes, yes. All is forgiven, good Pierre Constant!”

“Adieu—Felice—Robert—Marmjuda—all! I am going! Adieu! *In te, Domine, speravi!*”

The form stiffened. The eyes looked out into the vast unknown. The breast gave one convulsive shudder. The pallid hue of death spread over the thin face.

Norvell arose to his feet and turned away. Felice calmly crossed the thin, white hands upon the breast, looked searchingly into the dear face for a moment; then, rising, exclaimed faintly, in tones which those near her never forgot:

“Alone!”

Obedying an irresistible impulse, Norvell stepped to the girl’s side, and, placing a strong arm about her trembling form, whispered, “No, Felice, not alone!”

Her answer was a look of confidence and gratitude from a heart stricken too deep for words. In her white dress with her upturned face and the strange gleam in her eyes she was like an unearthly creature.

The crowd, struck at the heart with a terrible awe, still stood motionless as statues. Skelton’s lip curled, and a haughty scowl darkened his face as he beheld the young girl in the arms of Norvell. Then he folded his arms and waited. The fire and smoke must in an-

other moment drive them to beg for mercy; he could afford to wait for this satisfaction. Jacques Guion peered with bloodshot eyes over Skelton's shoulder, while crouching, knives in hand, in all manner of postures, like hounds in leash, the painted savages waited the word.

With a crash a section of the roof fell in, throwing a shower of sparks and burning brands about them. Still the man and woman stood immovable. Would they not try to save themselves? Would they not beg for mercy? Would not the girl throw herself at her captor's feet and lift that pretty face to him for protection? A flash of steel in the man's hand suddenly caught Skelton's eye. Would they thus cheat him? 'T was time to act!

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, springing forward and pointing to the dead man, "see! Your father! Would you leave him thus? Think you I can long hold these Indians? Their knives thirst. I beg of you not to put this responsibility on me. Only you can save him."

With a shriek that sent terror for a moment into even savage breasts, the girl had, at the first words of Skelton, sprung from Norvell's arms and thrown herself hysterically upon her father's body. Skelton stepped forward as if to touch her, when Norvell, flinging the knife away as if it were a snake, threw himself between them, and there stood, his legs planted like posts of iron, his muscles knitted, his breast arched, his eyes flashing, his head thrown back. Skel-

ton retreated to the side of his followers, and the two men stood glaring at each other, Norvell now beside himself with rage at the cruel trick of his enemy.

"Make way!" cried Norvell, and with a rush like that of an avalanche he was upon the group which had been driven back into the narrow doorway by the smoke and heat. His arms flew right and left with deadly execution. Every blow felled a man. He pushed and plunged, lunged and kicked like an infuriated animal, striking head or belly or back, he cared not, till the whole wild, cursing crowd were tumbling headlong one over another on the ground. Then he slammed the door shut.

"Felice!" he cried, groping his way on hands and knees to her side.

"Robert!" came the answer, as from another world, while her hand sought and found his.

"We will die here together," he whispered.

"Yes, together," came a faint answer.

The cry of the savages suddenly ceased, and the voice of Skelton called out.

"Give yourselves up, and the body of Pierre Constant shall have Christian burial in the cemetery of St. Anne's."

"Yes, yes, open the door, Robert!—in St. Anne's, beside my mother! Yes! We will!" The last words were cried out with desperate energy.

Norvell placed his strong arms under the dead man and lifted him from the floor. "Marmjuda—the door!" he commanded.

The Indian woman crept to the door and opened it.

"Come, Felice!" he said.

"My cloak and hood, Marmjuda," whispered Felice. The woman found them unharmed and bore them quickly to her mistress.

Out of the door and through a lane of devilish faces, Norvell strode like one in command, bearing his lifeless burden, closely followed by Felice with Marmjuda at her side.

Skelton took a step as if to escort the French girl, but, guessing his intent, she shrank behind the protecting form of her servant. Her face caused the man to hesitate. It had the extraordinary beauty called forth by a heroic deed. To the eye of this connoisseur of woman's beauty here was a new picture indeed—a beauty translated—a mingled sense of earth and heaven in the look. He cursed himself for his cowardice in its presence.

The little procession, followed by Skelton, Jacques, and the Indians, and among them some bearing their dead, moved in single file down the path to the river. Norvell, guided by Felice, went directly to the latter's canoe. Gently he held his burden till Felice, by his direction, had taken a seat in the bow; then reverently he laid the dead at her feet and took his place, paddle in hand, in the stern. Marmjuda stood helpless at the water's edge; there was no room for her. Her tearless face, pitifully sad, was hidden from view under the shadow of the bank, or the parting with the faithful servant had been harder than Felice could bear. As it

was, the woman, at Norvell's word, shoved the canoe into the deep water, heard in silence the tender adieu of her mistress, and then, as the canoe moved out into the stream, she was lost for ever from their sight. The canoes and *bateaux* in which the Indians and their leader had come were quickly filled, and the little flotilla moved out into the stream and took up the journey toward Detroit.

CHAPTER XX

FOR some time the light from the burning cabin boats that made up the little fleet; then, as they shone around the canoes and flat-bottomed drew farther away and the darkness thickened, torches were lighted and held at the bows of boats at the front and in the rear. The dead body of a savage lay in each of two Indian canoes, and that of Pierre Constant reposed in that which had been his own. The spectacle was a weird one. A dirge-like monotonous song came from the two boats that bore the Indian dead, and this, with the dull splash of the paddles, was all that broke the still, heavy air.

Only at intervals, as the position of his boat enabled the light from a torch to fall full upon it, could Norvell see the face opposite his own. At such times he tried to read its expression, but in vain; there was only a white face above a white neck and breast, that, against the black background of water, seemed chiseled out of fine marble—still, cold, and lifeless.

As long as the flames of the burning cabin were in view, the girl's eyes were riveted upon it; at times her lips moved, but no sound escaped them. The sorrow marked there was too deep for words—it was beyond

tears. Norvell felt the moments sacred and dared not speak. One fear possessed him: Was she thinking of the hour she had given him succour?—and was she, with regretful heart, tracing back to that time all this that had come upon her? He longed to ask her—to beg forgiveness—to pour out the sympathy that filled his heart for the fatherless, homeless girl. Long he waited, hoping she would make a way for him to speak; at last he ventured:

“May I speak to you, Felice?”

“Yes, the night is lonely.”

“I had feared to interrupt your thoughts.”

“My thoughts are long, long thoughts, monsieur. They will never end.”

“May I ask of what they are?” His voice betrayed almost the fear he felt.

“Oh, yes! I was thinking of you—of the failure of your plans—and all because of me. Had I not driven you away this morning, you might now have been safe.”

“And leave you to this Skelton and his hirelings? Never! Dearest Felice, I am far happier this moment with you, in the presence of the death which awaits me, than were I safe in the American army and knew that you would be called to account for what happened last night and be compelled to answer alone. You did right to turn me away from your father’s house. I was bereft of reason. I knew not myself nor my words.”

“I did not understand you then as I do now,” she

said calmly. "At first I helped you because of the cause you served—a cause we, my father and I, loved; then I sought to help you because I had learned to honour and love you; and now another reason is added which overshadows all—because *he* would have me help you."

"Speak not of that, Felice, my love; that is past for ever, and must never rise again to darken your happiness."

"My happiness!" she faintly exclaimed. "There is no room for that in my heart. An hour, two, three, and we shall be in Detroit, and you in prison, where I may not see you. To-morrow, a quick trial—and then—oh, my God! It will all be over. Happiness, indeed! There is none in this world again for Felice Constant. Would that I could go into the grave with him!" She looked down at the still form stretched out before her, with a look of unutterable woe.

"And is there no bitterness in your heart toward me?"

"None, Robert!"

"Then I fear not death."

"I shall ask to die with you," she said earnestly.

"Felice! Felice!" he cried. "God sent no sweeter, purer, braver soul to earth than yours. We may have but this brief hour on earth together. Let me hear your voice. I cannot touch you—you are so far away. Touch but your hand to the water, and I will mine. As the drops mingled run on to the eternal seas, God grant we may know and love each other in eternity!"

A sudden puff of wind, that threw the light canoe on its side for a moment and extinguished the torch in the canoe behind them, called their attention to what in their talk they had not noticed—the coming of a storm. The air during all the evening had been heavy and still; there had not been a whisper of wind. Distant thunder had from time to time rolled along the horizon, but had been all unnoticed by these two. So sudden, indeed, had the storm come in the darkness, that both captors and captives were taken by surprise. Voices were calling from boat to boat, and a shout went up to make for land.

The darkness was intense, for with another harder gust the remaining torches went out. With their going out a sudden ray of hope flashed across Norvell's mind. Through fitful flashes of lightning he saw the heavens rolling in angry billows of cloud, and caught momentary glimpses of boats scattered and tossed upon the waves like eggshells, the voices of the occupants drowned in the howling of the wind, and his spirit rose and exulted with the storm.

For a time he tried to keep the canoe headed into the teeth of the gale, crying to Felice to throw herself down in the canoe and hold on for safety; this she did, sharing her cloak with the dead man. Seeing his efforts were useless, Norvell let the boat drive, keeping it as best he could out of the trough of the waves. As the craft felt itself free from control, it gave a bound like a horse rearing from fright, turned almost completely over, struck an ascending wave, righted itself,

and plunged on. At that instant a ghastly cry for help came from almost beneath them, just as a flash of lightning lit up the water.

"Jacques Guion!" exclaimed Felice with horror in her tone.

"God Almighty have mercy on his soul!" cried Norvell, as he plunged his paddle deep into the foaming water and held on, at the same time shouting the half-breed's name; but no answer came back out of the night, and the canoe, heeding not the effort to arrest its course, plunged on like a frightened thing of life.

The rain was now coming down in torrents. The girl's wet clothes clung about her, and her streaming hair was dashed about by the winds, but she was hardly conscious of bodily sensations. Again and again the sky was rent, and deafening thunder leaped from shore to shore till the very river seemed to rock in its channel. The winds sighed, hissed, shrieked, and howled by turns, while the forests on either bank groaned under the lash of the storm. Norvell, amid the blinding flashes, saw they were rushing on to a rocky shore that lay low in the water a few hundred yards down stream. "A miracle alone can save us," he said to himself. With the energy of despair he held the paddle firm in the water to throw the course of the canoe into the deep channel beyond, but in vain was all his strength. The craft gave a great leap; then, as if lifted in strong arms, it rose and with a plunge and a grating on the stones ran its prow into the sand high up on the beach.

For a moment Norvell could scarcely believe his senses; then his heart gave a great bound of joy—they were safe. Quick as thought he leaped into the water, fairly lifting the canoe to safety. His first care was of Felice and her lifeless charge. Hurrying to her side, he helped her disembark; then, again taking in his arms the body of the old man, he carried it to where, in the friendly flashes of lightning, he had seen a rude fish-house. Laying his burden tenderly down upon its floor of dry sand, he turned, panting from his struggle with the storm, to the girl, and, clasping her in his arms with sudden strength, he held her there as if he would never let her go.

“Thank God that hour is not yet up!” he said in tones that were infinitely tender; then as the fury of the many-tongued blast roared about their rude shelter he cried, “Let the storm howl on. I hear naught but your sweet voice. Nothing can affright me now that you are safe and with me. What if the waves beat high! To hold you thus is a calm, deep as the bottom of the sea; to feel your heart against my own is to lose every fear but one, now impossible, of losing you. We shall live, Felice, you and I. Somewhere there is a way of escape for us. Somewhere there is a home awaiting us.”

It seemed to the girl as if a bud of a new passion within her had burst into blossom. “Love me well!” she whispered.

“My heart loves thee, dear, with all its strength,” he replied. “I will dedicate my life to thee. I will be to

thee father, mother, husband, lover. I love thee as the bee the flowers in which the fragrant honey lies—as nightingales the evening hours.”

His hand was entangled in her hair, that fell dripping wet over her shoulders. He lifted the head that lay upon his broad breast, and their lips met in one long kiss; it was a tumultuous heart that beat against his. She clung close to him as if they were but one. A flash of lightning lit up the rude hut, and her eyes, soft and trustful, in a look of tenderest love, met his. The dead man now lying before them, and the storm wailing a dying requiem, were of another world.

Shall we cry cruel—heartless? Ah, let those who have possessed the consuming master passion answer. Let those make reply whose lives, long parched for the want of the rain of deep affection, have come to rejoice in its sudden and plenteous downpour. Has it not been ever thus? Has it not proven itself in life—in your life—love, the mightiest of God’s creations—Himself in essence, engulfing all else in life, carrying in its giant current all the hopes and fears and sorrows and joys of the world, and bearing them as lightly as the wind bears the down of the thistle? Is it not God-ordained? Without it hearts must break, lives go out in dread despair, memories become a perpetual funeral chime, hopes be ever ashes. Are you blaming Felice Constant, happy in the arms of a strong, true man, her dead father at her feet? Are you wondering at this simple, lonely maiden of the frontier, whose heart was made to love as the bee to seek the rose; whose eyes

were made to look tender into other eyes as pure and good; whose lips, just now ripened to freshness, were fashioned to taste the sweets of connubial joy—are you wondering as you see the floodgates of her pent-up nature forced open—yea, even in the presence of death? If you would have it otherwise, then go make a world of your own. The Almighty has made one not to your liking.

Understanding, as they never before had, life's tenderest, sweetest meaning, these two unlocked their embrace at last to find the storm had spent its force, and naught remained as evidence of its fury but the dying murmur of the distant thunder, the lap of the waves upon the beach, and the freshness in the air.

Released from the spirit of vengeance that had consumed the years of his young manhood and had cast a shadow over his every purpose and desire, and filled with a new-born resolution to live for the good and the beautiful that life now held out for him, Robert Norvell felt the bounding of new life in his being that intoxicated him and made him passionately tender. Realising for the first time how thinly clad was the girl at his side, he drew her cloak about her with an expression of anxious consideration and bade her watch over her father while he gathered material for a fire. The girl, listening to his expressions of sweet solicitude, yielded to his attentions with trembling joy.

After groping about for a time upon the floor of the fish-house, Norvell came upon some leaves and twigs which had escaped the rain, and these he laid

beside a great boulder, where, by scraping away a few inches of wet sand, he succeeded in making a hard, dry floor. Then he produced a flint, and in a moment a tiny flame sprang up among the leaves and, spreading quickly, cast a ruddy glow on the rocks and bushes about him.

With a little cry of surprise Felice, disobeying her lover's injunction to remain in the fish-house, ran along the beach, and, stooping down, drew from what appeared to be a hole in the ground an armful of dry sticks, with which she hastened to renew the feeble flames, which gave evidence of fast dying, much to the discomfiture of Norvell. The girl had discovered in the light of the fire that they had been thrown ashore on the very island where, the day before, she and Marmjuda had waited for a glimpse of Jacques Guion, and where she had spent a part of the time building in the sand a make-believe oven which she had filled with fuel and covered with stones, imagining to herself with pleasure the surprise of the fisherman or hunter who next visited the spot at coming upon it. Norvell declared it was a good omen; that it was further proof to him of something that had been gaining a hold on his mind within the hours since they met, that an overruling Providence was round and about them to preserve them for each other.

While Felice went back to take up her watch beside the dead, Norvell gathered driftwood and carried it to the fire, which now leaped and crackled merrily, drying and warming the ground for a radius of several feet

about it. Then he carefully raked the fire away from the rock a few feet, and, making several trips among the flowering bushes that grew back from the beach, brought armfuls of leafy branches, and, drying them before the fire, made of them a warm couch against the face of the rock. Having done this and surveyed his labor of love with a lover's satisfaction, he went to fetch Felice. At the sound of his voice she arose, and, taking his proffered hand, accompanied him to the improvised couch beside the fire, where he bade her lie down and rest. To obey this man seemed a privilege born of heaven, and the eyes that lifted to his an ardent and steady gaze as she laid herself down and let him arrange a pillow of twigs and adjust the wet garments that clung around her were big with wonder and confidence. On Norvell's promising to take her place beside her father's body, Felice, worn out with long hours of exposure and sleepless anxiety, and lulled by the lapping of the waves and the soothing warmth of the fire, fell into a sudden and deep sleep.

In the hours that followed, while he watched beside the dead, Norvell lived his eventful life over again—from childhood to manhood, up and down the scale of his varied experiences. It all seemed like a horrid dream in the new awakening he now felt. The past was dead—as dead and as powerless to harm him as the corpse before him. The shadows so dense and so awful had lifted from his soul. As this old man, above whom he sat, had gone from exile into a glad companionship, so had come into his soul a tumultuous rush of

new life. And how alive, how divine that life had become to him in these hours. The past had seemed to whirl away with the storm—dead, drowned.

Once he arose and went to look after the fire. Having put fresh faggots on the glowing heap of coals, he stood long, as if transfixed by the charm of a subtle spirit, gazing into the face that had come to hold so much of meaning for him. In the quick movement of the days just past he had caught but glimpses of it; in the days during which they were separated he had tried to picture it, but its beauty was illusive, like a summer sunset,—no two instants alike and each succeeding one fairer than the last. Now, like a hungry man, he devoured it. Nor was it beautiful to him because of its perfect symmetry of outline; nor because of its gorgeous crown of hair that spread about and under the head like a pillow, soft as down; nor because, beneath a perfect brow, long, graceful arches spanned the hiding-places of eyes that spoke a soul on fire; nor because of lips that blushed from a new-found consciousness of their sweetest mission; nor because of form, or colour, or substance that one could spell out and tabulate: but because it was the face of one whose soul, shining through her eyes, breathing from her lips, trembling on her finger-tips, had set his soul on fire and was his—his for ever. For long hours there were but two beings in the world—only his life and hers, and he thought of how his life should henceforth be spent in pouring itself out that hers might be happy.

CHAPTER XXI

EARLY on the morning after Robert Norvell's escape from Detroit, Lieutenant Skelton hunted up the sentinel who had stood watch at the west gate the night before, and gave him to know that his life depended on his keeping silent as to what he had seen and heard. By a liberal bribe he induced the man to play a part.

It was contrary to Skelton's nature to let this occurrence pass without attempting to punish the audacity of the French girl who had so cleverly outwitted him, and he hungered to lay hands on the spy—for such he felt his assailant to have been—and pay him back for the double thrashing he had received at his hands. So he invented the story that the guard had been attacked in the night by a man who, having beaten him and robbed him of the key to the gate, had fled. This he told to Captain Lernoult, bringing the sentinel himself to prove his word. The captain coincided in Skelton's conclusion that Jacques Guion's spy was the assailant, and that the man, having been in the village and doubtless in the fort itself, had gone, taking important information with him. Skelton did not tell his superior officer that the suspected man had been at the ball, and, when last seen, was in company with

Doris Cameron, the blacksmith's daughter; for to have said this and been forced to admit that he had not given the alarm or ordered the man's arrest was to have confessed to a fault unpardonable.

It was no difficult matter for Skelton to obtain permission to take a force of men and go in pursuit of the fugitive. The permission he received gave him *carte blanche* as to whom and what number he should take, so he sent a message at once to the Indian village near by, whose sachem was to be depended upon to do his bidding, and two score of young warriors came trooping into the fort, ready to be led on any expedition that promised slaughter and reward: Skelton made them a short address, telling them that a rebel to the cause of their Great Father, the King, had entered the fort, learned its defences, and only a few hours before had escaped, doubtless going down the river to join the rebel forces, which would then march quickly to Detroit and kill and rob peaceable Indians and drive them from their village and hunting grounds. Thus harangued, the red men were eager to set out on the trail, promising not to eat, drink, or sleep until the fugitive's scalp was taken.

Skelton now lost no time in making his arrangements. Every boat on the river front save one small canoe was made ready for the expedition. Guns and ammunition enough to win a battle with an army were put on board. Skelton swore that as he had been captain of the watch during the night he was mostly responsible for the spy's escape, and refused to take a

single soldier, relying on his Indians and on Jacques Guion, who, morose and revengeful, was early on the scene, having stayed in the village all night. Jacques, he said, knew the river, the islands, and the marshes from Detroit to the lake as none other knew them, and his services would prove invaluable.

Skelton also determined that Doris Cameron should pay the price of her treachery, so, espying Parks at an opportune moment, he took him aside and bade him see to it that Neill Cameron learned of his daughter's relations with the rebel; and if, as he suspected she might do, the girl should attempt to leave the village, to prevent it by all means possible. Parks, smarting under the trick played on him by the stranger at Sandwich, which he half determined was known and connived at by the blacksmith's daughter, lost no time in following his superior's orders, and, as is always true when one's orders and one's inclinations lead in the same direction, Parks did his work surpassing well.

Neill Cameron had risen early that morning, for, in his absence, his shop and tools had lain idle. He had always been industrious and an early riser. It was no common occurrence for men and women—themselves not slothful—to be awakened in the morning by the ring of the anvil in Neill Cameron's shop. But this morning, anxious to feel the heavy hammer in his hand and hear the panting bellows, he was up and out almost before the sun had set its first warning signals in the sky, aiming to return for his breakfast, which, as Doris had been at the ball, would likely be later than usual.

He would not disturb her rest. She had been a good girl to remain alone and let him go away to the war, and it was but fitting on his return that he show her his appreciation of her good conduct by being a little considerate—something for which the burly, matter-of-fact blacksmith was not famous.

Scarcely had he got the fire started and filled his cooling-tub with water from the river, when a passer-by dropped in to express his pleasure at seeing the forge aglow again, and then another to say that he had some work that sadly needed the blacksmith's attention, and would he not attend to it immediately. Another plied him with a string of questions concerning the war, about which, indeed, Neill knew less than his questioner, for the expedition had spent the greater part of the time while away in finding its way through forests and over swamps, in foraging, and in fighting the ague, without once coming in sight of the enemy, though a few poor settlers suspected of disloyalty had paid dear for their spirit of independence, much to Neill Cameron's satisfaction; for no man that lived compared with this man in his savage hatred of what he conceived to be wrong—and the rebellion of the Colonies he considered nothing less than a crime, for the commission of which every rebel sympathizer merited a good stout piece of hemp. Cameron often boasted that were it about the neck of the arch-rebel George Washington, he would like to be at the other end, and with his big hands and muscles of iron "hoist him sky-high."

This early morning conversation between Neill and his neighbours chiefly related, as has been said, to the war, concerning which the blacksmith had more to learn than he had to impart, for tidings had reached Detroit, during his absence, of disasters to the King's cause along the Eastern coast, of opposition to the royal cause even in the mother country, and of help to the cause of the Revolution from France.

But what sent the hot blood into the face of the burly blacksmith and caused him to pump at his bellows with savage emphasis was the news that many of those who had been paroled on the taking of Vincennes and had returned to Detroit had publicly stated on the streets of the village that they would not again take up arms against the rebels, and some had even given evidence that their loyalty had been severely shaken by what they had seen and heard during the Vincennes campaign.

"Zounds!" he roared. "Things have come to a pretty pass! Treason preached on our very streets! No man knows when he goes home at night but his family may have turned traitor in his absence. If I commanded here, I'd shoot every dog among them that dared open his mouth to bark. Yes, a whisper from one of them, and I'd string him up, were he my own brother. God be praised, there's none of the poison in my house."

"You speak right, Neill," said a sallow-complexioned old man whose principal employment in the village was that of tale-bearing; "they do say the town's full of

spies; and, like as not, were Clark to put in his appearance before the gates to-day, half the people would be fixin' themselves up to receive him. I hear it said that old lady Moreau's been suspected of harbourin' a spy."

The old man wanted to say more of what he knew, but Cameron's angry scowl caused him to hesitate.

"That old woman again?" exclaimed the blacksmith, "and right under my nose? Me leaving my work and my daughter and going out to fight the ague, and this old shrew right next door to me harbouring rebels? I tell you, neighbours, this has got to stop, if I have to put a stop to it myself. What's the good of a fort, and the King's soldiers, and officers in gold lace, if treason can flaunt itself, unrebuked, in our very faces?"

At this point a newcomer joined the group. It was Sam Parks, half soldier, half blackguard and loafer. He had not happened in; he had come with a purpose. He was just in time to hear the blacksmith's last remark.

"Mornin', Neill Cameron. You're at work early."

"Good morning, Parks. Not at work exactly, but blowing the fire, but what with all I'm hearing I doubt if I'll work to-day. They says there's much grumblin' and bad feeling in Detroit, and some are suspected of going back on us and saying they won't fight the rebels. There'll be other work for some of us, I take it, if that 's so. We 'd better clean out the

town and know who 's friends and who 's enemies. A man can't trust his friends and family these days."

"You 're right, Neill, and that 's what I 've come to talk to you about," answered Parks confidentially; "and if you men don't mind I 'd like to have a word with Neill by himself." Upon this the other callers quietly filed out of the shop, the sallow-complexioned man going last and lingeringly.

When alone with the blacksmith Parks went at once to the heart of his errand, but not without some fear. Neill stood in an attitude of attention, his sinewy hands crossed upon the end of the hammer-handle, its base resting on the anvil, his brow contracted, and a hard light in his eyes.

"Neill," began Parks, "I 've come to say something that I don't like to say. Your'e a good man,—none better in this or in any other part of King George's dominions; and what's more, you're ready to back up your opinion with your muscle. There's a lot of things goin' on that ain't to our likin'—some of 'em purty near home." The man paused and looked cautiously into the face of the blacksmith, but the meaning of the speaker's words had not as yet penetrated the blacksmith's brain. Parks went on:

"There's been a spy in Detroit. He came direct from Clark's army. Some one treacherously let him in—a woman is suspected——"

"Madame Moreau!" exclaimed the blacksmith.

"No! A younger woman. But Madame Moreau has given him shelter."

"The she-devil!" shouted Cameron.

"He was seen last night at the ball——"

"At the ball!" roared the infuriated man. "And every King's officer there? And what were they doing all this time? Gods, what an army! They deserve hanging, every one of them."

"True, Neill Cameron; but the fact is, he was at the ball, and talked, and flirted, and danced with our wives and daughters."

"Not mine, thank God!" cried the blacksmith, shaking his mighty head from side to side.

"And when the ball was over he went home with the daughter of the most loyal man in Detroit. An hour afterward he overpowered the sentry at the west gate and escaped."

"Whose daughter, man? Where is the offspring of the accursed father? Find her, and you find a traitor and the daughter of a traitor. Who is it, Parks? You must know." The man was in a frenzy of rage.

"Doris Cameron," replied Parks hesitatingly, moving sideways toward the door.

"An infamous lie!" the man shouted, and, swinging his hammer at full length, he sent it with tremendous force full at the head of the shrinking Parks. The now thoroughly frightened man dodged the missile and was out of the door before the blacksmith could gather himself to follow. Left alone in his shop, Neill Cameron moved about like Vulcan himself enraged. He

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ripped off his leathern apron and threw it into the farthest corner; then, slamming to the door after him, he stalked heavily up the street toward his home, his brow black and lowering.

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN Doris Cameron awakened, late that morning, she listened for a moment to hear her father moving about as was his custom in the making of the breakfast fire. Hearing nothing, she buried her face in her pillow again and tried to forget her cruel dreams and the more cruel realities.

The night had been a wakeful one for her. Her eyes had stubbornly refused to close till, near morning, by force of sheer exhaustion, she sank into a troubled sleep. She had carried to her bed a breast full of resentment, not unmixed with fear, for she had learned to love Robert Norvell. The dreams of the night, waking and sleeping, had intensified the bitterness of heart with which she had closed the door on him when they returned from the ball. The man had obtained a mastery over her life that she could not understand, and, so sweet was it to her, she did not care to seek or discover its springs. She only knew that his presence filled every want of her nature. Did he love her? Once she thought so—hoped so; true, he had not said so, but love catches at straws, and, where there are none, oftentimes makes them. She had surrendered kindred and country—aye, she was ready to surrender

life, for him. And now there was a pain at her heart—a new kind of pain that stung and poisoned and dried up the blood in her veins. She felt dizzy and ill. She knew it was not a physical ill, but deeper, deadlier than that.

She raised herself in her bed, and her eyes caught sight of the ball finery with which she had carefully decked herself—for him, and something akin to anger sent a hot flush over her cheeks and neck. At that moment another face stood between her and her happiness, and, for the first time in her life, jealousy shook her very soul with all its devilish cruelty.

“The minx! The pretty wanton! Have I not time and again proved my prowess over all other women? Has not every man in the settlement been at my feet? Did I not have but to say the word, and every man of them was ready to surrender hand and fortune? Have I not dazzled them all—coquetted with them all—even to Captain Lernoult himself, and Governor Hamilton before him, and come away mistress of the situation—and, what is more to my credit, mistress of myself? Am I now to be beaten, thrust aside, laughed at by this simple French girl in her homespun frock and——” here she paused, losing herself for an instant in the remembrance of that tropical face, with its large pleading eyes, lips like roses, skin of amber, and all framed in a wealth of dark hair. “Yes, she was beautiful! But why was she at the ball? And why in that dress—so unsuited to the occasion? And with Lieutenant Skelton!” With a smile of cynical joy she remem-

bered that. "But," she continued, "why her sudden fear when, during the evening, she rushed into Robert Norvell's arms for protection?—and then her look of satisfaction when afterward she promenaded, her hand on his arm. It was a trick to deceive—a blind to cover a liaison agreed upon—and I have been but a dupe—an accomplice—a fool!"

It all came back to her now. Parks's words at the door that morning, connecting the names of Felice Constant and Robert Norvell,—a circumstance that had before given her but momentary disquiet; Robert Norvell's attitude toward her—kindly, grateful, sympathetic, but that was all; and, more than all, his last good-bye to her; she remembered his very words, she had said them over a hundred times during the night. He had come directly home with her. There was no lingering by the way. He had spoken anxious, hurried words. She recalled his heartless statement that he was going away and might never see her again; his promise, which now seemed to her forced and unnatural, that he would ever remember her goodness to him, and his grateful expressions, oft-repeated, which now she thought of as cold and formal, and his cruel farewell with a little kiss on her hand, which she had sought to wash away with her tears.

"And then he went to meet her!" she exclaimed, throwing herself again prone upon the bed, her voice vibrating with emotion.

At this point the outer door opened, and Neill Cameron's heavy footfall resounded on the threshold. She

stepped out of bed and proceeded to dress hastily. The quick, heavy shutting of the door startled her. A sudden fear chilled her veins. Her white fingers trembled, and a weakness stole into her limbs. Dark premonitions of evil shot through her mind. What if her father should find out? He had always been good to her. How much soever he might roar and bluster in his shop, he was gentle toward her; but she knew that underneath it all was a pent-up Vesuvius.

If she was unnerved at the opening and shutting of the door, she was paralysed with fear at the sound of his voice. It came like the blow of one of his heavy hammers.

“Doris!”

Her tongue refused to utter a sound.

“Doris, I say!”

She opened the door and stood on the threshold, speechless, her hair dishevelled from her feverish turnings on her pillow, her face ashy white and haggard, and her eyes red from an all-night's weeping. Neill Cameron stood in the middle of the room facing her, his solid legs planted well apart, his hands resting on his massive hips, and his big-veined arms akimbo. His face was something terrible to look upon; his iron-grey hair fairly bristled; his fierce eyes looked out from under heavy, threatening brows; his jowls were set like those of an angry bulldog; his eyes shot a steady beam cold as steel; and his neck and breast showed red cords that marked a rush of angry blood. The most unlucky man that had ever run counter to his opinions had never seen the like.

"Where's my breakfast?"

"I overslept, father. I did not know——" the girl started meekly to reply, at the same time moving toward the kitchen.

"Stop! Stay where you are! I want no breakfast."

Doris felt herself grow numb and shrank against the wall.

"Look at me! Answer my questions! Where were you last night?"

"Why, father, you know I was——"

"Answer me! I know nothing! But by God I will know!"

Had he taken another step forward she would have fallen to the floor.

"I was at the ball."

"Who was with you?"

The truth dawned upon her; he knew her secret. But somehow it did not add to her fright.

"One whom you do not know, father. He had only just come to the settlement."

"His name?"

"Robert Norvell." She spoke without looking at him, so she did not see his quick look of surprise; but she noted his now breathless interest in her answers, which heretofore he had seemed to anticipate.

"Who is the man? Where did he come from? Answer me truthfully, girl, or I shall forget you are a woman."

"He is a soldier. He came in with those who came with the Vincennes party—with you."

"Girl!—you lie! I knew every man among us—there was no Norvell."

He was now standing directly over her in a menacing attitude. A hurried knock at the door saved her. Neill shouted, "Come in," and, as Doris started to move away into her room, he called to her, "Stay! I am not through with you!"

A passer-by had stopped to tell Neill Cameron the news; the whole village was on the streets; Indians were gathering from the neighbouring village; conflicting reports were being circulated; a sentinel had been overpowered; a spy had been in the village for a fortnight and had escaped; he had been killed; a posse was starting in pursuit; he was known to a number of citizens; he had mingled with the dancers at the ball; he had fled with Pierre Constant's daughter; an attack on the fort was about to be made by a party of Americans.

Doris heard it all with tremulous interest. She hardly dared look at her father during the exciting recital, so fearful did he look. He said but little, letting his garrulous neighbour run on; finally he asked:

"Do you know the name of this—spy?"

"Nor——Northville——Nor——" stammered the man, trying to recall what he had heard.

"Norvell——Robert Norvell," added Cameron, slowly and distinctly.

"Yes, yes, Norvell. You have heard, then?"

"Yes. My daughter knows him. He was her partner at the dance."

"So I hear," replied the visitor, alarmed at Neill's face; "but I dared not tell you, Neill Cameron. I must go. Listen! They are coming down to the wharf. They go by boats to Grosse Ile. They think to find him hiding there."

Neill pushed the door shut and strode over to the girl, who now stood calmly resigned.

"Do you hear that? The whole village knows of your perfidy! You have brought disgrace upon me! Where did you see this man last?"

"At our door last night. He came home with me."

"When and where did you first meet him?"

"On the beach at Sandwich, the night of the ball there."

"By appointment?" He glowered fiercely.

"No, no, by chance. He came between me and one who would have done me violence."

"Bah!" The tone of the exclamation was contemptuous. "And how was he both at the Sandwich ball and among the Vincennes party?"

"I do not know," she replied, losing command of herself for the moment. "But I know this—he saved my life—my honour there."

"Your honour! Ha, ha! And what, pray, has become of your precious honour since?" The man was again livid with rage, and towered above her, a mass of brute strength. "You were with him at Sandwich. You have been seen with him in this village. You have had secret meetings with him in the cabin of Antoine Moreau, where you were forbidden to go."

You were at the ball with him. You were the last one seen with him last night. You have tricked me. While I was away fighting, you were here plotting to undo me. You have sold yourself, body and soul, to the devil."

"Father!"

"Don't 'father' me. I am not your father and never was, thank God! I took you, a sprawling brat—bought you from an Indian for a jug of whiskey—a dear purchase too—and saved you from having your brains dashed out. Poor service I did. Better were it had I not interfered. Your honour! Ha, ha, ha! It's not worth a pinch of snuff to a dead Indian!" The man was pacing the floor like an enraged lion.

With a cry of mingled surprise and anguish the girl threw herself at the blacksmith's feet.

"My name! Tell me my name! For the love of God tell me who I am!"

"You have no name—none I shall pronounce. You are to me only the mistress of spies and informers. Leave my house! Go tell the Moreau woman I have driven you out, and that she may tell you what she pleases. I release her from her pledge."

"Father! Father! I cannot go with that awful name you have given me ringing in my ears. No, no—not that! I am good; indeed I am. I may have wronged you and everyone, but I am not a bad woman. I swear it!"

"You'll have hard work making the people of Detroit believe that," he said coldly.

"But *you* believe it—you—you have always been kind to me—my—father—my——"

"Enough of your twaddle! I have been much too kind to you! Go, ingrate, get out of my sight!"

She started to creep toward the door.

"Stay," he called after her, "there is one condition on which you may remain."

Doris turned, a look of joy shining through her tear-filled eyes.

"If you will confess your fault openly and give testimony against this man."

"But he has not been taken," she replied anxiously.

"But he shall be. Skelton and a band of thirty Indians are in pursuit. He left with old man Constant's daughter, another of his paramours, no doubt. They will find them at Grosse Ile. They will wipe that nest of treason off the earth. Lernoult will make short shrift of this spy when he is taken, as he will be ere to-day's sun sets. To-morrow you will testify against him. Now get my breakfast."

Doris arose, and took a few steps as if to obey; then, stopping short, she stood tranquil and erect before the blacksmith.

"The conditions you name I cannot fulfil. It is true I know this man. It is also true that I respect him more than I do all those who now seek his life. More than that, Neill Cameron, I am convinced he fights for a cause that is just."

"What! Treason in my own house?" the man thundered, advancing toward her with great strides.

"Call it what you will, sir," replied the girl, firmly standing her ground, her splendid form drawn to its full height, her eyes blazing. "I tell you this,—that if Robert Norvell dies it will not be by any testimony of mine. Sooner will I die with him."

He raised his arm again to strike, but her eyes met his with martyr courage, and the blow did not fall. Instead, he cried:

"Ingrate! Turncoat! Rebel!" Then, throwing himself upon the door, he flung it open, and, fairly leaping out, made his way cursing toward the fort. Halfway there he met Parks, who, at sight of his furious face, would have stepped aside, but he could not.

"Here, Parks, you watch that girl of mine; let her not escape; shoot her if she attempts it; I go to Captain Lernoult! Damme, the town is full of treason!"

For a moment after the blacksmith had gone Doris Cameron stood dazed. The room seemed to whirl about her. She groped about as one blind till she found her hat; then, tying the ribbons under her chin with shaking fingers, and mechanically surveying the room that had been so long her home, she left the house and made her way quickly to the home of Antoine Moreau. Once within its doors she threw herself into the ample bosom of Madame Moreau and burst into hysterical sobs. Overcome by the suddenness of it all, the good Frenchwoman plumped herself down in her great chair while the girl sank to the floor at her knee.

"What is it, my dear?" she asked, taking the girl's hat from her head and smoothing her dishevelled locks. "You'll spoil your pretty face. What has happened?"

"Have you not heard?" she moaned.

"No, my dear, I have heard nothing. Monsieur Norvell told me in the night that he was going away and that you knew all; and, as he has not returned, I suppose he has found a way to safety."

Then, between sobs, the girl's story came piecemeal: the ball—the miserable night—the angry father—the pursuit—the imminent danger to Robert Norvell—the mystery of her parentage. "And he told me," she went on, looking pathetically into the eyes of the Frenchwoman, "you knew my name—that you would tell me."

"He said that, truly?" the woman asked searchingly.

"Yes, yes. He did."

"Thank God! I have longed to tell you; but years ago we—my Antoine and I—promised under an awful threat never to reveal it. We alone know it. It was for this reason he forbade your coming here. Your name is Doris Norvell. You are the sister whom Robert Norvell seeks."

The girl, lifting her drawn and tear-stained face, looked unutterable wonder and bewilderment into that of her friend.

"My brother!" she whispered hoarsely. "My brother! And you did not tell me!"

"I did not dare, child. I hoped every day that Antoine would return and I could ask him what to do."

"And you let Robert—my brother—go,—and you told him nothing?"

"He went so quickly. He wakened me from sleep. He was here but a moment. I thought of it when he was gone, and I tried to call him back, but it was too late. But there, there, he will return again. He has gone to join his army, and they will soon return. So dry your eyes."

"No, no! You do not know," exclaimed the girl distractedly. "A band of Indians is searching for him. They have gone by the river and will overtake him. Felice Constant went with him. It is all plain to me. They will go to Grosse Ile and find him there. They will bring him here—they will kill him before my eyes! No, no! I will not stay to see it!" The girl sprang to her feet, her eyes gleaming wild. "Quick, dear Madame Moreau! You will help! I will go to him! They shall not find me here!"

With a frightened look she sprang to the door and peered out toward the river that ran peacefully under its banks not a stone's throw away. The populace that had thronged to the wharf to see the Indians, under command of Lieutenant Skelton, embark, had returned to their homes and their employments, to discuss in all its shapes the strange rumours, and to await with eager anticipation the return of the expedition, which no one doubted would be successful. Two score of Indians acquainted with every winding of the river, every hiding-place along its banks, could well be depended on in such an emergency.

“Give me your hood, Madame Moreau, your apron, your staff—quick! No, keep them; I’ll not masquerade. Adieu, dear friend, Heaven protect you! Tell them, if they ask for Doris Cameron, that she is dead. If they ask for Doris Norvell, tell them she has gone to Grosse Ile to help find the spy. Ha, ha! I’ll show Robert Norvell a sister worthy of his name. I, too, can fight for freedom.”

Then, planting a kiss on each of the blanched cheeks of the astonished Frenchwoman, she left the house and hastened toward the river. It was a short distance, but it seemed interminable. At her home she stopped for the paddle to her canoe. Then she ran down the bank. A thousand fears rent her bosom. Should she be seen; should her canoe not be there; should her courage fail. She laughed at the folly of this last. For a moment her heart stopped beating as she noted that the boats along the shore had all been pressed into service. Then it bounded again as she espied her own little craft, made for her by Neill Cameron out of skins tightly drawn over thin ribs of iron, and just large enough for one, pulled high up under the bank where she had left it but a few days before as being a safer place for it in case of the storm that had threatened for some days. It was due to this circumstance and to the fact that it was so light and small that it had not been taken that morning by Skelton and his Indians.

Quickly she drew the boat into the water, where it danced about on the light waves that played upon the

surface like things of life. How proud she was of its pretty, graceful curves and its gazelle-like speed! She talked to it and caressed it as if it heard and knew her. In a moment she had taken her seat in the stern, paddle in hand, and had turned the bow down stream. Her stroke was true and strong, and the light craft fairly skimmed over the water. She had gone not fifty yards ere a voice called from the bank above her, and, looking, she saw Parks running along the bank calling to her to stop. She made no reply, but gave the paddle a swift push that sent the canoe out into the deeper current.

“Stop, or I’ll shoot you to the bottom of the river!” the man shouted. Still she made no reply.

Parks was now on the wharf searching frantically for a boat. Once more he demanded that she stop, and again she bent to the paddle. Another moment and she would be beyond danger. A shot rang out over the water, echoing back from the farther shore, but still she went on, her lips set, and her eyes intense on the course ahead. Again a sharp report. She felt a sting in her breast, but on she went desperately. She was now in midstream and her canoe was cutting the water like the blade of a knife. The shouts from the shore grew faint; she was safe from pursuit, but of this she cared not. The low, uncertain shapes on the horizon to the south were all she saw. To reach there before Skelton and the Indians she could not hope to do; but there was the blind, unreasoning hope, born of despair, that they would not find him, and that she would

be there to turn the pursuit or at least to know its event and die there with him,—for she felt in her heart of hearts that Robert Norvell would sell his life dear.

All her bitterness toward the French girl of Grosse Ile was now gone. The love of the two made common cause. So intent were her eyes on the distant goal that she saw not that drops of blood were oozing through the thin fabric of her bodice, nor did she realize that her stroke was becoming feebler, and that objects that stood out at first so clear under the noon-day sun had grown hazy and indistinct. A sharp pain at her breast once caused her to drop her paddle and press her hands over the stain which now spread down upon her skirt. The afternoon sun beat pitilessly in her face. A growing faintness came over her, and she leaned over to scoop up with her trembling hand a little of the cool water to bathe her brow and parched lips. Then she turned again to the paddle, but it had fallen from her hand into the current and floated just out of reach. With her hand she tried to steer the canoe to where she could reach it, but the exertion caused a throbbing pain and a freshet of warm blood that now dripped in a crimson stream to the bottom of the canoe. A mist gathered before her eyes. She could not see the shore. Her chin dropped upon her breast, her senses reeled, a cold chill crept to her heart, and then she fell heavily against the side of the boat, making it careen till the edge on which she lay nearly touched the water, one arm, stretched out at full length, burying itself elbow-deep beneath the surface.

The canoe with its unconscious burden was yet miles above its destination and wholly at the mercy of the current. The air was dense and still, and the river like a sheet of glass. All nature seemed asleep, save now and then a flock of wild geese circled about the canoe, and then with a great swoop and flapping of wings settled in the marshes that formed the western bank of the stream.

Skelton and his Indians had reached the upper end of Grosse Ile and were now skulking along its water-line, hidden from observation by the rank swamp-growth, aiming to reach the Constant cabin just after nightfall.

Jean Guion, the old Frenchman of the Canadian shore, had spent the day getting his muskrat-traps in readiness to set them that same night along the opposite coast. Jacques had gone to the ball at Detroit the night before and had not returned. He had gone away in a savage mood, and Jean was waiting anxiously for his return, hoping that a better spirit had prevailed with him and that he had not carried out his threat to betray the American soldier's presence within the stockade.

As night came on the old man grew restless and ill at ease. Jacques had not returned. It was a bad omen, for Jacques, though often in Detroit, had no intimates there, and nothing to keep him longer than the few hours at most that were needed for his errands. He never had spent a whole day and night there, as now he was doing.

At last, weary with pacing up and down the shore and watching, he gathered up his traps, and, loading them into an old dugout that served as a reserve boat for the household and had long since been discarded as unseaworthy excepting when the water was perfectly calm, the old man started for the marshes directly opposite. The sun was setting as he pushed carefully out into the stream. He had plenty of time at his disposal, so he paddled slowly at a sharp angle with the current for a good half hour until darkness settled around him, and then, making his dugout fast to a log that lay half-buried in the water, he set his traps. When he had satisfied himself that they were well placed, he made his way in the dark to his canoe and started to return. As he did so he heard a distant cry like the scream of a panther, and then another, till it seemed to come from a pack of hungry animals in pursuit of prey. He bent his head low to the water, that he might get the sound more distinctly. "Indians!" he exclaimed aloud.

The sound came from down the river—a mile or more he judged. Quickly he turned his boat down stream, and, striking out for the centre of the current, made all possible speed. Several times he stopped to listen; but the cries had ceased. Then, as if doubting his ears, he turned the prow again toward home. Suddenly in the direction of Pierre Constant's cabin appeared a light, as if from burning brush, and again his ears caught the sound of wild cries that he could not mistake. A long time he sat, listening and looking.

It could not be an Indian attack on poor old Constant—and yet those savage cries and that flame which was now climbing higher! Not for one moment did he connect that which he saw and heard with Jacques' errand to Detroit, nor did Robert Norvell's name occur to him as having the remotest connection with the matter. "It is a band of drunken Indians," he said to himself. "Poor Pierre Constant! Poor Felice! What will become of her?"

The dugout in which the old man sat was drifting with the current, and now it was full in the glare of the blaze that spread a blanket of light out over the water. He could see the forms of the savages as they stood against the blazing background; the door of the cabin opened, and two forms stood upon the threshold—a man and a woman; two men approached the door and stopped; in a few moments the report of a gun reverberated over the water, and the man in the doorway fell; then another report, followed by the leap of a man across the threshold and the closing of the door after him.

Jean's boat was still drifting till now it was below the burning cabin. The night was all aglow with the blaze. The terrible shrieks still resounded in his ears. Fascinated by the strange sight, he stood up in his boat, and, turning its prow north, began to push in to the shore to get a nearer view. Just then an object floating toward him in the water caught his eye. At first it seemed to be an upturned canoe, but as it drew nearer he saw that it was right side up, but on the

point of turning over from a weight that threatened to capsize it. With a few strokes of his paddle he drew alongside, and in the glare of light from the shore he beheld the form of a young woman, her face ghastly white, her long tresses sweeping across her shoulders to the stream, her dress stained with crimson, one white hand pressed over her heart, the other buried deep in the water.

For the time being all else was unheeded by Jean Guion—the yells of the Indians, the crackle of the flames, the crash of falling timbers, and the cloud of smoke and sparks that rolled across the surface of the water in the heavy air. With infinite difficulty and danger he shifted the position of the body in the canoe, slipped off his woollen shirt, and, making of it a pillow, placed it beneath the woman's head; then, lashing the boats together, he began the long, hard struggle toward his cabin on the Canadian shore. So intent was he on his work that he saw nothing of the strange, weird funeral *cortège* that accompanied the dead Pierre Constant to the water's edge, nor heard or saw the departure of the Indians and their victims.

A roll of distant thunder and a fitful puff of wind told the old boatman that a storm was coming, and that he had no time to lose if he was to bring his frail craft and its precious burden safely to land. Once or twice he thought he heard a quick sigh, a stifled groan, a smothered breath; but when he looked, the impassive face gave no sign of life. Then with all his strength he resumed his paddling.

Mintinao was standing at the landing when he drew to shore, peering out into the darkness for a sign of her husband and son, both of whom she suspected of being on the water and in imminent danger from the storm which was now roaring through the forests and whipping the water into spray that blew in her face. She heard the swift swash of a paddle, and then, in a flash of light from the heavens, she saw two boats lashed together run their prows upon the sand and saw her husband bend over a white face. She heard his call for help, and, slipping to his side and getting his quick, hurried word of command, she helped him bear the form of a woman to shore, and then, by the path up the bank, to the cabin, where they laid it on the one rude bed the place afforded.

Mintinao asked no questions. True to her nature, she stood silent while Jean, now for the first time alive to the thought that perhaps life yet remained in the body, brought brandy and forced a few drops between the pallid lips, meanwhile directing his wife to cut away the bodice and find the wound. A flutter of the bosom, a slight parting of the lips, and a murmured word sent a thrill through the anxious Jean. She was alive! Water and towels and clean linen were hastily found, and the wound washed and dressed after a rude fashion, and then, with scarcely a thought of the danger to himself, the old man rushed forth into the storm, and, taking the path along the bank, ran as fast as his tottering legs could carry him for help to the Sandwich settlement.

It was years since he had visited the place; he had often declared he would never set foot within its boundaries while it recognised the flag he hated, but now no thought of this entered his mind. A woman, young, fair, helpless save for him and his, lay dying in his cabin. The services of priest and physician were needed, and he alone could bring them. The winds hurled themselves about him. He lost the path. He stumbled and fell. Once he rolled to the bottom of the high bank, cruelly bruising himself in a dozen places. The darkness was absolute, and only by stopping till the friendly lightning showed the way could he push on with any hope of a sure footing. The rain dashed in his face and drenched his garments, but he kept on.

Scarcely able to walk, he entered the village and from the first person he met he inquired directions to the priest's house. The good man was not at home; he had gone to Detroit during the day and had been detained, doubtless by the storm. Learning the whereabouts of the home of the village physician, he hastened to him. True to the instincts of his profession, the man of physic expressed his willingness to go, but he must wait till his hardy little Canadian pony was harnessed to the two-wheeled cart and he had made ready the bandages and restoratives needed for such a case as that described. The old Frenchman, excitable by nature, was beside himself at the business-like importance and leisurely dignity with which the man of bottles and big words made ready; but finally, the

storm having abated, the two were bumping and jolting along in the springless cart over the rough, unfrequented road that led away to the south toward the Guion cabin.

Mintinao sat wrapped in silence at the foot of the bed, swaying to and fro, and humming a low, weird tune, when the door of the cabin opened and the two men entered. Then she slipped away to a far corner and stood keenly observant. The doctor, with professional promptness, set at once to work. He listened for the heart-beats, felt of the pulse, the brow, the hands, the feet, removed the bandages, and pressed the wound from which the red tide was yet dripping, and then with rude instruments sought for the bullet. Jean stood at the foot of the bed, anxious, awe-struck, as he looked into the calm, beautiful face and noted the splendour of the physical life that was so cruelly going out. The doctor finally paused, and, looking very soberly at Jean, said:

"The wound is mortal. She will live till morning."

"God have mercy!" groaned the Frenchman, crossing himself devoutly.

The two talked of the strange occurrence, the doctor busying himself the while with his bandages, and Jean for the third time related all that had happened from the moment he started to set his traps to the present. They argued and speculated as to the burning of old Constant's cabin and his probable death, and as to the connection of all this with the beautiful girl that lay dying before them. Could there have been a

general uprising of the Indians about the fort? It seemed probable, and yet no word of it during the evening had come to the Sandwich settlement, and the firing of guns would surely have attracted attention. And who was the dying girl? The physician thought he recognized the face as that of the fairest of all the company that came from Detroit to the Sandwich ball; but the resemblance of this thin, wan face to that ardent, high-spirited, rosy-cheeked one that stood out fresh in his memory was slight. He had heard the name of the Detroit belle, but he had forgotten it.

Having bound up the wound and left stimulants and directions, the physician took his departure. Jean and the Indian woman heard the sound of wheels grow fainter down the road, and then sat down stolidly to watch through the long night.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE first faint grey of the morning found Robert Norvell still watching tenderly beside the body of the man whom all his life he had sought with vengeance in his heart. He had not so much as closed his eyes during the night. It had been for him a night of retrospect, of self-examination, of high resolve. Strange, transforming power of love! Truly, *le grand passion!* Noblest, best of all the faculties of the soul, binding, loosing, enslaving, freeing, moulding, using us as it will. On this spot sacred to memory and marking the beginning of a new life within him, a resolve to live for the best that was in him, to atone for the wasted past, to make a home worthy of the idol of his soul—here his heart erected a temple.

When Felice awakened it was with a little cry of mingled fear and surprise, as if she expected to see the familiar surroundings of her simple home and the face of her aged father; instead she looked up into the face of the man who in her dreams had brought her untold joy.

“Is it you? Where am I? My father—is he here?”

“Yes, Felice, dearest, we are here. I have been

watching over you with eyes that dared not sleep for fear of losing you for ever. You are rested. Come to the river and bathe your face. It will waken and refresh you."

She took his hand, and, as they started, she looked wistfully into his eyes and led him aside to the little fish-house, where, without a word, she kneeled, drawing him down beside her.

"Holy Mother of Angels," she prayed with infinite sweetness and calm, "comfort and protect us thy children."

"And may God be merciful to me!" said the man solemnly: it was his first prayer of manhood. Then, rising, he took both of her hands in his, and, looking unutterable love into her eyes, said:

"I will guard thee with a father's care. You are mine to cherish for ever."

Together they walked to the water's edge, and, smiling over the bird-like performance, she bathed her face in the cool current, then shook out her hair till it fell in a long, wavy shower to her waist.

"I have heard," he said, looking at her with intense admiration, "that one of old, seeking love, found her a dweller among the rocks."

"I could hope that she was not caught at such a time and place as this, wearing her mother's wedding clothes," she answered blushing, as she surveyed the rumpled finery that half-concealed her charms.

A little later the mists lifted from the river, and the sun rose above the Canadian forests to find itself mir-

rored in a world of sparkling blades and blossoms. The air had a sparkle and a freshness in it born of its electric bath. The waters had lost their angry mood, and rippled as peacefully as if they had never known a moment's unrest of spirit, kissing the shore with lips gentle and seductive. Clouds of waterfowl swept in graceful curves overhead, and the finny inhabitants of the waters leaped and sported in holiday wantonness.

Amid such environment a canoe sped silently and swiftly down the current of the beautiful Detroit till it found its mooring in the old accustomed nook, and there, lightly and caressingly pressing the sands, it waited while under a tall spreading tree whose roots reached far down to drink the cool moisture from the stream, and whose great limbs spread out as if in paternal protection over the scene of an old man's exile, Pierre Constant, without a groan or sigh, took up his long rest, his requiem the matin voices of birds, the quiet murmur of leafy woods, the ardent lapping of the waves. No cathedral choir ever sang so sweetly as the voices that floated that morning through the forest aisles and echoed from the canopy that hung, vine-clad, overhead. No priest ever uttered the *requiescat in pace* so deeply and so tenderly as did here the voice of God himself.

Long afterward a sunken mound was found near the charred and time-worn ruins of a cabin on the eastern shore of Grosse Ile, near the point where it loses itself in the broad reach of waters flowing from the north. Over the blackened timbers a great ivy had

spread its tender protection, as if to hide them from the impious gaze of men, and over the sunken mound a rude cross of wood bore witness that there lay Pierre Constant—a good man.

* * * * *

When Jean Guion, that morning at sunrise, opened his cabin door and strained his eyes in a long gaze up the river, it was with a drawn and waxen face and trembling figure. The long night's watch over the mysterious form that lay stretched at full length upon his couch, with its deepening pallor, its labored breathing that at times betokened the near approach of death, was full of terror to the old man; for in one of the still moments when he had fallen into a half sleep he dreamed he heard an awful, despairing cry from off the water—the cry as of one drowning, with curses on his lips—and it was the voice of Jacques, his son. On this occasion, starting from his reverie, he went to the door, and, peering into the darkness, bent his head to listen, but no sound met his ear save the splash of the waves and the moan of the winds that lingered among the forests in the wake of the storm. Then he went back to his vigil, murmuring his prayers, and crossing himself not once but often. Then, too, the monotonous low moaning of Mintinao, which gave sole expression to the anxious fear of the Indian mother, struck the heart of Jean like the wailing of a lost spirit.

Several times, when the heavy breathing of the dying girl stopped abruptly, the old Frenchman crept

quickly to her side, and in the dim, ghastly light of the low-burning candle looked inquiringly into the wan face; then the breast fluttered, a deep sigh escaped the half-opened lips, and the breathing became regular again. She still lived. Once or twice she seemed to be speaking; then Jean and Mintinao crouched down on their knees close up to hear—perhaps a word of Jacques, for in their thoughts they had connected his prolonged absence with the dread happenings of this awful night; but unpronounced words died on the girl's lips.

During the morning little change took place in the condition of the sufferer, save that the breathing grew softer, the face took on the ghastly pallor that betokens approaching death, and the eyelids relaxed under the long, sweeping lashes.

An hour later, Jean, weighed down by anxious doubts, went to Sandwich to learn something of the whereabouts of Jacques and an explanation of the occurrence of the night, and Mintinao was left alone with the dying girl. Suddenly a faint whisper attracted the Indian woman's attention, and, glancing toward the bed, she saw the eyes of the girl fastened upon her. Drawn by an irresistible impulse, she stole to her side.

"Madame Moreau—it is you?"

The dying woman had reached that strange state of physical and mental exaltation that oft-times comes so mercifully at the last. The Indian woman made no answer, but crooned a song, as if singing to a babe waking from a troubled sleep, and smoothed back the

soft roll of fair hair that, like a frame, encircled the girl's white face.

"Where—is—he—good—madame? I—have—come—a—long—long—journey—to—see—him. I—am—tired—so tired. There—is—no—time. I—have—but—a—moment—more. It is dark—very dark. May—I—not—touch—his—hand?"

The deep-set eyes of the girl fastened themselves on the face of the Indian, who, bewildered, answered nothing, save as her weird song struck a tenderer chord and the dark wrinkled hands pressed lighter over the girl's cold brow.

"He—is—coming!" the girl cried suddenly with strangely awakened strength, lifting a hand as if in welcome and turning her face to the door, a triumphant light shining in her eyes. There were indeed footfalls on the path outside, and voices—the Indian heard them. The door opened, and Jean Guion entered, followed closely by a man and a woman.

"Robert—brother!" came clear and distinct from the direction of the bed.

"It is the voice of Doris—Doris Cameron," exclaimed the man aloud. Then, hurrying to the bedside, he knelt and put his face down close to hers.

"Doris—Doris—what means this?" Then without waiting for answer, "Doris, do you know me?"

"Yes!"—came slowly and distinctly. "Robert—my brother—I understand—I—see."

The man drew back a moment, struck dumb with sudden emotion. For a moment he tried to speak, but

his lower lip trembled so that he could not utter a word. Then, gathering strength, he cried, "Yes—your brother,—the brother of every woman who thus dies for those she loves. God forgive me! I caused this sacrifice of a noble life."

"Call me sister!" came the plaintive cry.

"Yes—sister, sister in the holiest sense in which a man may repeat that name. I had a sister once: now I have taken you, Doris, into my heart of hearts, in the place of that shadowy name and substance. But tell me, dear, brave sister—who has done this thing? Where is Neill Cameron?"

This last he cried turning suddenly to those in the room who stood in a group behind him, as if demanding an answer.

"Ask—not—my—brother. Doris Norvell—forgives—all."

"Doris Norvell!" exclaimed the man, springing to his feet,—a glimpse of the truth crossing his mind. "My God, is this all a dream? Shall I yet wake to find myself alone, and all these faces and forms—the sights and sounds of these troubled days and nights—but the fancies of a dreamer? Felice, do I hear aright? Am I mad? Speak, girl, tell me the truth."

The man was pacing the floor of the little cabin like one bereft of reason. Then, not waiting for an answer, he hurried to the bed, put his strong arms beneath the head and shoulders of the dying girl, and held her close as if they were one.

"Tell me—tell me," he begged piteously, gazing

into her eyes, now fixed and rayless, "are you Doris Norvell, daughter of John Norvell, killed by the Indians? In the name of God, speak to me, Doris!"

The little group of listeners bent nearer, scarcely breathing. She drew a long, shuddering breath and choked as she tried to speak, but those about her heard,—

"Yes—Robert—my brother!"

The man tenderly loosed her from his grasp and laid her head on the pillow; then, falling on his knees, hid his face in the coverlet while great sobs burst from a heart whose chords seemed broken. Felice stole to his side and knelt with him, one arm about his neck, one hand holding in loving pressure a cold, thin hand of the dying girl.

"Listen, her lips move! She speaks again," whispered Felice.

"Robert—tell—them—I—too — fought — for — the cause! Tell—Felice—Constant—I—love——"

A sudden thrill shook her frame; her eyes turned to his in one long, passionate look of recognition; her breathing came fainter and fainter; then a quick gasp like a smothered sob—and she was dead.

Mintinao stood at the door, gazing with intent, appealing eyes on the river as it wound like a bright ribbon to the north; Jean Guion sat himself down at the foot of the bed and bowed his head low in his hands, for he had learned the truth about Jacques; Robert Norvell looked long and tenderly on the cold, set face; then, turning to the tear-dimmed eyes that

looked up into his own with infinite sympathy in their ray, he said slowly and impressively:

“I have nothing now to ask of Heaven.”

At nightfall a canoe bearing two persons—a man and a woman—sped silently and swiftly down the current of the broad river. An Indian, standing on the shore of Bois Blanc, at the point where the Detroit spreads itself out into the great lake, seeing it, wondered, and told his people. They said he had seen the spirit of the river going on to meet its destiny in the great ocean.

THE END









